THE AUSTRALIAN
Women's Weekly
DECEMBER 2015
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Carrie Bickmore
A TIME TO REFLECT

Stars celebrate!
Chrissie Swan, Lisa McCune & Amanda Keller

Real life
A touching tale of life after death

True crime
INSIDE A HIGH SOCIETY MURDER

Merry Christmas

100+ *brilliant* FESTIVE IDEAS
* Homemade wreaths & garlands
* Julie Goodwin's traditional family feast
* Maggie Beer's seafood lunch
* The ultimate gift guide

GLENN MCGRATH OUR BABY EMERGENCY
Exclusive photos


Cate Blanchett
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TWININGS OF LONDON

Enjoy Every Day



STARTING ANY MAJOR project before Christmas is never a good idea. In my case, the project is a full-scale renovation of my small inner-city apartment.

Four months ago, I was with Sarah, the unflappable interior architect, as the builder not unreasonably insisted the finish date would be in the middle of December. As anyone over the age of 20 knows, if you have any project, big or small, that involves tradesmen in December, you should think February.

For months, I have been camping on spare beds and pull-out mattresses, and making a nuisance of myself by hogging the bathroom or arriving home late and making a racket. My wardrobe has been in storage and my sanity at breaking point, although Sarah and her team of competent young women (why are they so much more competent than young men?) have been quick to step in when I was about to give up the will to live.

Of course, if I don't move in before Christmas, I know, logically, it really doesn't matter. Not in the scheme of things.

So I am psychologically prepared to put it to one side and just get on a plane to Adelaide and spend blissful days bobbing off the coast, eating King George whiting at the Grange Hotel and drinking Clare Valley riesling on a hot afternoon.

If I am still homeless come the New Year, well, the sofa beds will still be there. And besides, I have much to be grateful for. I am blessed with a happy, healthy and functional family.

As Carrie Bickmore says so eloquently, Christmas can be overshadowed by great sadness for many people. As regular readers know, Carrie's late husband Greg is always in her thoughts (he passed away five years ago). Yet, this year, as our cover story demonstrates, she and partner Chris are overjoyed by the arrival of baby Evie. She joins seven-year-old Ollie in the Bickmore household. In their story this month, it is Ollie's love for Evie that lingered long after I read Caroline Overington's moving piece (see page 28).

There is a new person at my place as well this Christmas. Harry McCabe is the youngest of my nephews and nieces, a title that I feared (I love being an aunt) would remain with his older brother, Jack.

As many of you are also rushing to get everything done, I hope this month's issue provides some respite and plenty of inspiration. In my case, the apartment is actually on track. Thanks to the coolheaded Sarah and her team, it looks like it will be completed in a week or so.

And so by the time you're reading this, I might even be about to host one of those "last minute" Christmas Eve soirées that you only ever see in the pages of a magazine.

Merry Christmas.

Helen.

Helen McCabe, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Email me at awweditor@bauer-media.com.au
Follow me on Twitter at @helenmccabe



WATCH OUR VIDEO
To see Helen McCabe talk about the stories in this month's issue, download the free ***viewa*** app (see Contents) and scan this page with your smartphone or tablet.

CHRISTMAS TV SPECIAL For fabulous festive craft, food and inspiration, tune in to *Christmas With The Australian Women's Weekly* on December 6 at 8pm on the Nine Network.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAMIAN BENNETT.


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Christmas
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COVER: CARRIE BICKMORE
Photography by Peter Brew-Bevan
Styling by Mattie Cronan
Carrie wears Vera Wang gown

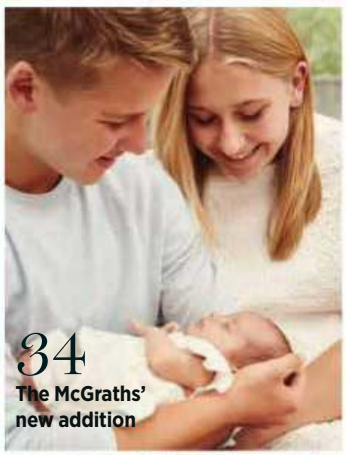
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viewa

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235 See Maggie Beer at our shoot in the Barossa Valley

FREE RECIPES

SAVOURY

174 Asian vegetable salad
159 Aussie Rudolph sandwiches
177 Baked cherry ham with cherry and nectarine relish
227 Basil and spinach pesto
166 Beef rib roast with herb mustard crust
228 Bread and butter cucumbers
183 Carrot cumin salad
217 Chicken skewers with green olive dressing
228 Christmas chutney
157 Christmas tree sandwiches
185 Christmas turkey with apricot and almond stuffing
219 Crispy cheese ravioli
165 Devils on horseback
233 Heritage tomato salad
201 Kingfish carpaccio and apple with orange ginger dressing
165 Lemon hasselback potatoes
203 Mahogany-glazed pork belly
219 Mediterranean and meatballs with white bean dip
203 Minted red cabbage salad
236 Ocean trout with pine nut, currant and chervil salsa
233 Oysters with cucumber and verjuice jelly
205 Prawn wontons with green apple chilli dipping sauce
183 Prosciutto-wrapped prawns
174 Red rice salad
183 Roast lemon herb potatoes
166 Roast pork loin with plums and garden herbs
233 Salad of bitter leaves and grapes
201 Scallop and shiitake custards
226 Seedy flatbread
165 Smoked oysters and smoked ocean trout on pumpernickel
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159 Fruity cubes
212 Ginger cake
206 Hazelnut and fresh fruit torte
168 Macadamia and fig steamed pudding
169 Mango and passionfruit pavlova
234 Maggie's summer pudding
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191 Meringue-topped mango and passionfruit cake
191 Panettone with sweet ricotta and cherry compote
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169 Rum balls
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DRINKS

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227 Pomegranate tea cordial
220 Rhubarb and elderflower mojito
234 Sparkling ruby cabernet spritzer
186 White peach champagne punch

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Open line

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PEARL OF WISDOM

"A family is like a painting – the children are the picture and the parents are the frame."
M. BOON, *DAISY HILL, QLD.*

The winner of our Pearl of Wisdom this month wins a signed copy of *The Royals In Australia* by *The Weekly*'s Deputy Editor, Juliet Rieden.



WRITE TO US

Letter of the Month wins $100. Your postal address must be included in all correspondence. Please state clearly if your letter is not for publication. See Contents for the location of Bauer Media Limited's Privacy Notice.

Letter of the month



I was very moved by the story of *The Farmer Who Killed His Family* (*WW*, Nov). I think I can understand better than most why such a tragedy could happen. Dad suffered a frontal lobe injury at 21. He married and had children some years later. People say my dad was kind, caring, yet the brain injury caused Dad to suffer from unpredictable rages. He lacked impulse control and could behave in a sexually inappropriate way. It was totally impossible to reason with my dad and though a hard worker, he was completely unable to manage money. He would get into debt and Mum was left trying to pay the bills and feed the family. I just feel so sad that this man ended up killing his family, but I do understand how someone could be pushed way beyond their limits. And whether we like it or not, we all have limits. If good could come out of this terrible tragedy, it would be awareness of how much support brain-injured parents, their partners and families need in order to get through.
NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED.

Kate's the classiest

What a joy it was to read your interview with British beauty Kate Winslet (*"It's Not An Older Woman, Younger Man Thing"*, *WW*, Nov). She is incredibly down-to-earth, generous with her time and open and honest about both her professional and personal life. I loved learning more about her latest film, *The Dressmaker*, in which she portrays Tilly Dunnage (and I'm envious of the costumes she got to wear, too!). And how fantastic that it's home-grown?
C. ANDERSON, *GEOGRAPHE, WA.*

A rare royal glimpse

The edited extract from *The Royals In Australia* (*Diana In Love Before The Fairytale Ended*, *WW*, Nov), particularly the photos exuding the love between Princess Diana and Prince Charles in 1983, were both moving and heart-rending. I was at a conference near Coolum on the Sunshine Coast when we all deserted our posts to go down to the road below to watch the royal couple pass by. A very quick glance, but memorable. We needed to be reminded that there was love and passion involved in their early relationship and one can really glean how hurt Diana must have been when the eventual circumstances of their separation emerged.
C. JOLLIFFE, *BUDERIM, QLD.*

Why I admire Nigella

Thank you for featuring Nigella Lawson in *The Weekly* (*Nigella's New Life*, *WW*, Nov). Not only does she inspire me to attempt to cook when I'm long past it, but also to emulate her courage in soldiering on despite losing her mother, sister and husband to cancer. She is one of the most beautiful, intelligent women of our era.
J. BEILBY, *WARNERS BAY, NSW.*

Fantastic food divas

Reading about the wonderful Food Divas (*WW*, Nov) inspires me. Cooking is such a wonderful way to stay grounded. Annabel Crabb offers her wonderful bipartisan approach to interviewing dignitaries, Julie Goodwin is a celebrity mum who presents herself perfectly as such and Michele Cranston is of a similar ilk. So, thank you to our food divas for their wonderful input. I feel so comfortable at their tables.
A. BOOT*, SOMERTON PARK, SA.*

On our website ▶▶▶▶▶

From an inspiring Melbourne Cup ride to incredible images, here are the stories we covered on aww.com.au this month.



You came to us for NEWS



"After five rounds of IVF, I'm finally pregnant!"
You were thrilled to read netball star Liz Ellis was expecting her second child after five rounds of IVF and three miscarriages. The story reached 1.1 million people on Facebook, with 65,000 clicking through to read the story.

✻ What a wonderful story to read. As someone who had 11 rounds of IVF and suffered miscarriages on the journey to get my beautiful family, I get really emotional hearing these feel good news articles. Wonderful, wonderful news. *POSTED BY* ***MICHELLE COVEY***

✻ It's always nice to hear the success stories. Thanks to the amazing world of IVF, my husband and I are expecting our first little miracle next month. How lucky we are to be born in an age when such assistance is available. *POSTED BY* ***ELISSA STEPHENS***

✻ Huge congratulations! Losses are so painful, but they make you appreciate your baby that much more. *POSTED BY* ***SARAH MCDONALD***

"Sydney hit by massive storm"

You loved this incredible image we shared from *Bondi Rescue* lifeguards of a storm rolling in over Sydney's Tamarama beach. The post was clicked on 30,000 times and reached 427,000 people on Facebook.



"Melbourne Cup winner Michelle Payne's secret heartache"



Michelle Payne made history when she became the first woman to win the Melbourne Cup. We first featured her story in 2010 and you were fascinated to read about her past, with our Facebook post reaching 112,000 people.

✻ Inspiring! Thanks for your magnificent effort today! We are so proud of you! *POSTED BY* ***KATHLEEN WATKINS***

✻ Her mother and sister would be very proud, I'm sure. *POSTED BY* ***KATHY TAYLOR***

✻ What a sad but beautiful journey. Someone was watching over her today. *POSTED BY* ***VONA SMITH***

✻ An inspiration to women all over the world. *POSTED BY* ***KARYN NIMMO***

✻ Thank you, Michelle, for being such a role model for my daughter. You're an inspiration. *POSTED BY* ***LISA FITZPATRICK***

If you have a story, we want to hear from you! Send us an email to openline@bauer-media.com.au.

You came to us for ROYALS

"Harry's emotional hug for veteran"
It seems Prince Harry has taken the words of his late mother, Princess Diana, to heart: "Hugs can do a great amount of good". This story got 2400 likes on Facebook.

✻ I love Prince Harry. What a humble human being. So blessed to have people like him still in this world. *POSTED BY* ***FIONNA MOORE***

✻ Just proving that he is as human as you and I! Maybe he needed a hug, too. *POSTED BY* ***DIANE MCKEWIN***

You came to us for REAL LIFE

"Meet the beautiful faces of Down syndrome"
Having a child with Down syndrome is too often seen as a curse. With these stunning photos, Julie Willson wanted people to see what a blessing it could be. Her gorgeous images reached 230,000 people and were shared 10,500 times on Facebook.





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Cate Blanchett and Leigh Sales. Below: Tracy Bowden and Ross Coulthart.





Host for the evening, Richard Glover. Left: Kate McClymont and Helen McCabe.

ANDREW OLLE LECTURE

The worlds of media, big business and the arts collided when *The Weekly*'s Editor-In-Chief Helen McCabe delivered the Andrew Olle Media Lecture. Cate Blanchett upped the star wattage at the event held to honour the late TV journalist Andrew Olle, with a "state of the union" address on the Australian media. Citing *The Weekly*'s reports on domestic violence, adoption and family law – as well as noting its emergence as an agenda-setter – Helen spoke of an erosion of trust between the media and the public. A full transcript of her speech is at aww.com.au. Guests included ABC Chairman Jim Spigelman, *The Australian* Editor Clive Mathieson, DMG Radio's Cathy O'Connor and the Football Federation's David Gallop.



Below: ABC Managing Director, Mark Scott.



Cate Blanchett, Leigh Sales, Tanya Plibersek, Julia Baird and Annabel Crabb (and their well-dressed other halves) strike a pose.



On the scene

Our own Helen McCabe delivers the 2015 Andrew Olle Media Lecture.



The Australian Financial Review's Paul Bailey (left), Jessica Gardner and Editor-In-Chief Michael Stutchbury.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY QUENTIN JONES. HELEN MCCABE WEARS AURELIO COSTARELLA DRESS AND BULGARI NECKLACE AND CLUTCH.



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Carrie Bickmore

"Life doesn't always go to plan"



"it's been an overwhelming year, but also a good year," says Carrie Bickmore.

The first Christmas carol of the year can move Carrie Bickmore to tears, as the season marks a painful anniversary. Yet, as she tells **Caroline Overington**, though life doesn't always go to plan, with the arrival of a new baby, "it's working out to be wonderful".

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PETER BREW-BEVAN** STYLING BY **MATTIE CRONAN**

HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY EVE GUNSTON. FLOWERS BY FLEUR MCHARG. CARRIE WEARS VERA WANG GOWN. VINTAGE CHAIRS FROM SCOUT AND MONTREUX. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.

"He'll be talking to her in the cot and I'll hear him saying, 'I'm going to look after you all your life', and 'I'm so glad I got a little sister'."

IT IS BEGINNING to feel a lot like Christmas, and for some people, that's great. Christmas is supposed to be a time of joy. Yet it's not for everyone, at least not all the time. This year's Gold Logie winner and *The Weekly*'s December cover star, Carrie Bickmore, 34, is one woman brave enough to acknowledge that Christmas is, for many people, a time of mixed feelings.

Yes, it's joyful, especially if you have small children, but it's quite okay to feel some sadness, too, particularly when those you hold dear aren't near.

On any measure, Carrie has been blessed this year. In March, she welcomed a new daughter, Evie, into the world, and the little girl has proved to be the perfect playmate for her young son, Ollie. In May, she won the Gold Logie, for most popular personality on Australian TV, and the admiration of millions when she used her acceptance speech to campaign for more research into brain cancer. And yet ...

"Christmas has changed a lot for me over the years," Carrie tells *The Weekly*. "I don't find it maybe as joyous as a lot of people do because the truth is Christmas can be lonely for a lot of people. If you're missing somebody, if you've had a relationship breakdown, or if somebody you love isn't there, even if you're surrounded by other people, you can sit there and still feel incredibly lonely, and I've felt that many times.

"So, I don't hype it up. Of course, I've always made sure it was a lovely time for Ollie, but I also spend time reflecting on life and reflecting on people who aren't with us."

Carrie's mixed emotions stem in part from childhood "because my parents split up when I was little [her mother moved with her to Perth; her dad stayed in Adelaide], so I was either not with my mum or not with my dad, so it was never the [happy families] scenario I saw on TV."

Carrie got married at age 25 to Greg Lange and for 10 years – before and after the wedding – she watched him battle brain cancer.

"Christmas was often tinged with sadness because Greg was sick," she says. "We'd have a lovely time. We would celebrate with family, but it was never completely joyful."

Christmas 2010 was particularly difficult: Greg was gravely ill and died the day after Boxing Day, leaving Carrie a widow at 30, with a three-year-old son.

"So, from the moment I hear the first carol, Christmas can bring a tear to my eye," Carrie says, "and I guess that's why I don't hype it up."

Carrie's measured, thoughtful approach to life is part of the reason she is so admired by her peers and the fact that she's prepared to talk about sorrow as well as success is what endears her to the audience.

She knows as well as anyone that she is on the whole blessed and the arrival of baby Evie, with new partner Chris Walker, in March, has brought more sunshine into her home.

"It's very different the second time around," she tells *The Weekly*. "I find I am calmer [than with Ollie]. I'm not sure if that comes with age, but also, when I had Ollie, I had a lot of challenges in my life, which required a lot of time and strength. I found it all a bit of blur.

"A lot of my life has been moving forward, having to keep going," she says. "Now I can stop and appreciate my time with Evie. I am at work and I'm busy, but I'm also out the back in the garden on a rug. I'm hanging with her and I'm loving that time."

Ollie is eight years older than Evie and Carrie says the age difference has proved a blessing, too.

"Ollie is besotted," she says, "and I'm not running around with [a newborn and] him still in nappies, too, which so many people do, and I might have had to do that, had my life not turned out differently.

"So this [the eight-year gap] is not how maybe I would have planned it, but life doesn't always go to plan and it's working out to be wonderful.

"When Evie first arrived, Ollie said, 'I really wanted a little brother', and I said, 'I know you did'.

"But now, he'll be talking to her in the cot and I'll hear him through the monitor, saying, 'I'm going to look after you all your life', and 'I'm so glad I got a little sister'. So, I think they'll end up having a wonderful older brother, little sister relationship."

Besides welcoming Evie into the world this year, Carrie also found the courage to do something on Logie night that she had long wanted to do: make a pitch for more support for brain cancer patients.

Taking to the stage to collect her prize, she nervously pulled out a blue beanie and placed it on her head.

"Everyone thinks it's this rare form of cancer – it is not," she said in a speech televised to millions. "It kills more people under 40 [than any other cancer]. In 2010, my husband Greg was one of the unlucky ones. And after a long, long, long battle, he died from brain cancer. Over 10 years, I watched him suffer multiple seizures a day, lose feeling down one side of his body."

Carrie explained how Ollie had to push his dad around in a wheelchair because he couldn't walk anymore.

"He was an incredibly brave man," she said, holding back tears, "but he shouldn't have had to go through that."

Carrie urged "anybody that's on TV in Australia tomorrow to whack on a beanie. I want to get the nation talking about brain cancer. It receives next to no funding, which is ludicrous because without funding more people are going to die."

She tells *The Weekly* that she was moved to tears to turn on the TV the next day and see the *Today* show's Karl and Lisa and *Sunrise*'s Kochie and Sam, and everyone else wearing beanies.

"I almost didn't say it because I thought nobody will do it and I'll look like the biggest idiot," she says, "but the next day, everywhere I looked, people ➤

CARRIE WEARS PAOLO SEBASTIAN GOWN.





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"Christmas when I was a little girl was midnight Mass, with Mum singing."

were doing it and I kept crying. It blew my mind. They were incredibly supportive and have been since. And because I know they all have lots of different charities to support, as I do, to see them come together for my cause was humbling."

It wasn't only TV types who rallied. All of Ollie's friends turned up at school wearing beanies "and Ollie wore his for weeks", Carrie says, laughing. "He was so proud. He's a beautiful little boy and he gets it. I've been very open with him about his world and what happened to his dad, and what life without his dad might look like, from the beginning.

"He's on the journey with me and he totally got how important that night was, and that everyone was doing this for his dad."

Carrie says she wasn't sure "until the last second" whether she was actually going to go through with the idea of putting the beanie on her head. Her partner, Chris, had been holding it for her, so she always had the option of changing her mind, but she is now "so glad I did it. Because while it has been heartbreaking, by sharing a little of myself and my journey, I hope I've been able to show other people going through horrendous things that they are not alone."

The campaign for more funding has gained momentum since that night and Carrie is proud to be part of a new foundation designed to encourage research.

"I've always wanted to do this and now feels like the right time," she says, "because something needs to change and maybe I'm in a position to help, so it's been an overwhelming year, but also a good year."

What, then, for Christmas 2015? Well, let's just say Carrie isn't sure what she's going to do yet.

"I was raised in a religious family, so Christmas when I was a little girl was midnight Mass, with Mum singing. She had the most beautiful voice and we'd sit and giggle, me and my cousins. Then, getting home at two o'clock in the morning and having Milo, and lots of family the next day."

Now with a family of her own, "it's maybe just fish and chips on the beach. We will see some family. We won't go over the top. Last year, we had a barbecue with salads. Low-key suits us, I think. It's nice." ■

Carrie's crusade

In a tribute to the husband she lost to brain cancer, Carrie has established the Beanies for Brain Cancer Foundation to raise funds for research into what she calls "this insidious disease". The foundation aims to raise $1 million and will be launched with an all-star music festival called BrainBeats, in Melbourne on Sunday, December 6.

Carrie's husband, Greg Lange, died in 2010 after a 10-year battle with the cancer. "Given so many people who die from brain cancer are under the age of 40, I felt a party that celebrates great music, great food and great local talent would be the way to go," Carrie said in a statement.

Visit CarriesBeanies4BrainCancer.com.au for more information.

CARRIE WEARS VERA WANG GOWN.



Glenn McGrath tells

I almost lost both my girls

When baby Madison came seven weeks premature, neither cricket legend Glenn McGrath nor his wife Sara were prepared for the fight of their lives. **Michael Sheather** reports.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAMIAN BENNETT** STYLING BY **REBECCA RAC**



At just 1.835kg, Madison was constantly monitored. She also enjoyed "kangaroo care" (skin-to-skin contact) with big brother James.

HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY ALISON BOYLE. PHOTOGRAPHS OPPOSITE SUPPLIED AND USED WITH PERMISSION. THIS PAGE: SARA WEARS ZARA KNIT AND JEANS, AND WITCHERY SINGLET. BED LINEN BY SHERIDAN. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.







All smiles now ... Madison looks completely at home with Glenn and Sara and her older sister and brother, Holly and James.

SARA WEARS LOVER DRESS FROM DAVID JONES. HOLLY WEARS ZARA DRESS. JAMES WEARS ZARA KNIT. CHRISTMAS TREE FROM KMART. DECORATIONS FROM THE CHRISTMAS WAREHOUSE, CHRISTMASWAREHOUSE.COM.AU.

CRICKETING LEGEND Glenn McGrath glanced up at the face of the doctor attending to his wife, Sara. What he saw sent a chill through him. Glenn, whose first wife, Jane, died in 2008 after an 11-year battle with breast, brain and bone cancer, had seen worried looks on doctors' faces before. He also knew that when it comes to medical emergencies, there are no guarantees.

"I remember seeing the doctor's face," recalls Glenn, 45. "I saw in his eyes that he was deeply concerned, not just for Sara, but for the baby, too. I couldn't help but be worried as they wheeled Sara off to the operating room to deliver the baby by caesarean section. I didn't know how Sara was going to be. I didn't know how our baby was going to be. All I could do was wait until I was called in and I'd been in that dodgy situation before, not knowing how it was all going to turn out."

Glenn had every right to be worried. Only a few days before, Sara Leonardi-McGrath, 33, who married Glenn three years ago, had been admitted to Kareena Private Hospital in southern Sydney with soaring blood pressure, a symptom of a condition known as pre-eclampsia.

Her blood pressure was an astonishing 200/110, more than double her normal rate and dangerously high for a woman 33 weeks into her pregnancy. If Sara's blood pressure remained uncontrolled,



she was at risk of convulsive fits (eclampsia), liver and kidney damage or, in the most severe circumstances, stroke and death for both mother and child. The only cure for pre-eclampsia is to deliver the baby, which means delivering the baby prematurely.

"The first thing the doctors did – I wasn't even sitting on the bed yet – was give me a steroid that is supposed to stress the baby and mature its lungs," says Sara. "When a baby in the womb is stressed, it starts to develop its lungs so it can breathe when it is finally delivered. It's a natural reaction to stress, to prepare it for birth. But there's a big difference between a stressed baby, which happens naturally in birth, and a distressed baby. So, the whole time they were monitoring the baby to see what her heart rate was."

Luckily, the baby's heart rate was fine. "Her heart rate hadn't changed at all," says Glenn. "That meant she wasn't distressed in any way and as long as her lungs began developing as they should, it was just Sara's health that we had to worry about."

Sara's condition had come on suddenly. Glenn and Sara conceived their child through IVF because Glenn had had a vasectomy after the birth of his now teenaged children James and Holly. "We were lucky because we conceived after just two rounds of hormone injections," says Sara. "Other couples go through round after round and it can be very difficult, so we know we were lucky." ➤



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Glenn cradles Madison in his arms. "She was so tiny, unbelievably tiny."



Yet after a relatively smooth start, heavy bouts of morning sickness began at week six. "I was puking and puking and puking," Sara says. "It was awful. It wasn't so much morning sickness as all-day sickness. I was ill all the time. Then, one day, it was so bad that I couldn't pick up James and Holly from school. I couldn't even get in the car."

Her doctors hospitalised Sara with hyperemesis gravidarum (HG), the same form of morning sickness that struck Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge.

"I had to have eight bags of saline because of how dehydrated I was," says Sara. Yet that didn't stop her feeling ill. "I couldn't eat anything," she says. "If it was salty, it would make me vomit. Sweet, it would make me vomit. It was yuck. But come weeks 18 to 22, I started to feel a lot better."

Finally, she was able to eat and exercise again, as she wanted "to be in good shape for all that breastfeeding and carrying the baby around".

Her doctor also checked her regularly. "My health was fine – at all my check-ups there was nothing that you might have said was out of the ordinary," says Sara. Then, around week 25, her doctor noted a low platelet count in her blood. Platelets are the mechanism by which blood clots, helping to prevent bleeding.

"Then I heard Madison cry and it was such a good sound to hear."

A normal range is 150,000 to 250,000 per microlitre of blood. Sara's count was down to 130,000. "That meant we would continue to monitor it and when it came time for delivery, then the anaesthesiologist would decide on the most appropriate kind of anaesthesia for me," says Sara. "I didn't have a delivery plan. I left that to the doctor. I thought, he spent all that time at medical school, he can decide."

Yet even if she'd had a plan, nothing could have prepared her for what came next. Glenn had just returned from a trip to India and the UK with cricketing commitments. Sara had been juggling a renovation to their house with looking after James and Holly, as well as her pregnancy and she was glad to have Glenn home.

On August 30, Sara woke on the day of her baby shower. She looked in the mirror and noticed that she was bigger than she might have expected. "I looked fat," she says. "I felt fat. I thought, well that's what happens with pregnancy, you swell up sometimes – your arms, your legs, your neck, your face. I just felt a bit swollen and nobody said anything at the baby shower – mind you, who's going to tell a pregnant woman she's ugly at her baby shower? No one. They all said I looked great, so I wasn't worried." ➤

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Yet, two days later she was even larger and this time it was accompanied by a severe headache. As the morning wore on, things began to change rapidly. Sara developed a pain under her ribcage and then a terrible pain near her ear.

"It was an awful, awful pain between my ear and my jaw, the kind of pain you know from your childhood when you have a bad throbbing earache," says Sara. "I'd had headaches before during the pregnancy, but I'd never had an earache. This was really strange, even stranger than the fact that I was looking like the fat kid Augustus Gloop from *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*."

Sara was midway through week 32 of her pregnancy. "I wasn't going to let it slide," she says. "When you are pregnant, you really have to be on top of everything that is happening to you. It might seem normal or nothing to worry about, but it could a sign that something is wrong, so I grabbed Glenn by the hand and said, 'Let's go straight to the doctor'."

The doctor measured Sara's blood pressure and then patted her on the hand. "He said, 'You're going to hospital – now'," recalls Sara. "I was wailing and crying, and saying no, why, no. Why do I have to go to hospital? But he wouldn't tell me what was wrong. And he wouldn't tell me what my blood pressure was, in case I freaked out."

A few minutes later, she was in hospital, just 200m away, being injected with steroids. "That's when they told us what was happening," says Glenn. "Obviously, we knew it wasn't good or we wouldn't be in the hospital, but even so, it was a shock."

It quickly became clear their doctor had made the right call. Sara's platelet count was now drastically lower – a condition known as thrombocytopenia, which in severe cases can lead to spontaneous internal bleeding – and her urine was deep brown, which meant a lot of protein, another casebook symptom of pre-eclampsia.

"It started happening from the minute I reached hospital," says Sara. "My whole body began shutting down, slowly. I had so many pills to keep all these things under control. It was very scary. Every doctor seemed to be in my room trying to find out what was happening."



WATCH OUR VIDEO
To see behind the scenes at our shoot and an interview with Glenn and Sara, download the free ***viewa*** app (see Contents) and scan this page with your smartphone or tablet.

Sara's doctor was performing a delicate balancing act – he needed to stabilise Sara and deliver the baby quickly, but he also needed to consider the baby's health.

"He was trying to give the baby enough time for the steroids to work," says Glenn. "She needed her lungs to develop properly, but Sara's condition was getting worse. It was such a fine line. They were monitoring Madison's heart rate and it was good, so that was one thing on our side. That allowed the doctor to go an extra day."

During the night, fluid retention blew up Sara's face, neck, arms, legs, eyelids and her lungs. "I was just enormous," she says. "By the morning, I needed oxygen. I knew I was going to deliver that day, so I thought I would have a shower, but while I was in the shower, I couldn't breathe. I was really struggling for breath so I had to go back on the oxygen."

In the operating theatre, Sara knew she had to put herself in her doctor's hands. "I was scared of having the epidural, but by then I was thinking, just give me whatever, I don't care. When you can't breathe, it's amazing how much fear you can overcome."

As the caesarean was completed, Glenn was called in, dressed in a surgical gown and mask. "The surgeons had a sheet up, ➤



"If it had been another day or two, Sara could have died."



Madison's strength helped pulled her through and now she's thriving.

so I couldn't see too much of what was going on," says Glenn. "But then I heard Madison cry and that was such a good sound to hear. It was just a little half cry, but it sent a wave of relief through me. I just knew that she was going to be okay."

After her placenta was removed, Sara was sent straight to intensive care. "She started to improve almost immediately," says Glenn. "But she had been in such a bad state. If it had been another day or two, Sara could have died. Another day without help and she would have been … we would have been in a lot of trouble."

Madison was born weighing just 1.835 kilograms. Glenn was able to hold her when he arrived in the nursery after her birth, while Sara was on her way to intensive care. "She was so tiny, unbelievably tiny," says Glenn. "But she was wonderful. James and Holly came in to hold her, too. But with premature babies, the thing is to let them sleep and feed, and not disturb them or they burn up too much energy. So we put her down and let her be."

Sara had to wait another two days before she could hold her baby. "I have to thank the night manager and the male nurse for that," she says. "It was about 2am and I was awake. They came in and wheeled my massive bed down the hall to the nursery, so I could hold her for the first time. She was so small, but she was perfect."

Sara came home from hospital after 12 days. For the next six weeks, she and Glenn travelled daily to see their daughter. "She didn't need a humidicrib," says Sara. "She was strong, so strong. However, because she was so tiny, they concentrated on building her up. Usually, a baby will come home after three days, but that was not possible. That was probably the hardest thing, going home without your baby. Only someone who has been through that knows what it feels like."

Glenn is clearly besotted. "Sara has absolutely loved having a baby girl in her life. Moreover, there is clearly a real connection between the two of them. It's beautiful. It's a very loving connection. Sara was always going to be a great mum, in any case. I could see that in the way she gets on with Holly and James. They have a wonderful relationship. But I always knew she would be a great mother in her own right."

Sara, who says they chose Madison simply because they liked the name, says she's well aware there's a special connection between mothers and their premature babies. "Any woman who has had a premature baby would tell you they have a special bond," she says. "It was all very distressing at the time, but it really brought home to us how lucky we are to have her and that everything has turned out the way it has. She's so tiny and defenceless. I would rather have my right hand cut off than have anything happen to her." ■

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Amanda Keller and Harley Oliver with Liam and Jack

For TV and radio star Amanda Keller, Christmas is simply not Christmas without making her family sit down and watch that evergreen holiday movie, *A Very Brady Christmas*. "I love the way that everybody in the film is dealing with a personal issue," says Amanda, who recently released her autobiography, *Natural Born Keller*. "Bobby had dropped out of college to become a race car driver, Marcia's husband has lost his job and even Alice is upset. However, everything works out and they sing *O Come, All Ye Faithful*. Every single time, I cry all over again." Thankfully, Amanda's Christmases with husband Harley and boys Liam, 14, and Jack, 12, are less complicated, often conducted either in Queensland with Amanda's family or in New Zealand with Harley's. ➤

WORDS BY MICHAEL SHEATHER AND BRYCE CORBETT. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY KELLY TAPP. AMANDA WEARS ASOS JUMPER, ZARA JEANS AND WITTNER BOOTS. OTHER CHRISTMAS JUMPERS FROM ASOS. CHRISTMAS TREE AND DECORATIONS FROM BIG W. CHRISTMAS SACKS FROM PAPIER D'AMOUR. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.

'TIS THE SEASON *to be silly*

What Christmas would be complete without a few cringe-inducing family traditions? We asked four well-known families to don the reindeer antlers and kitsch it up in the name of Christmas spirit.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALANA LANDSBERRY** STYLING BY **REBECCA RAC**




"We've dispensed with the Trivial Pursuit marathon. It ends in tears."
Santa
STOP
Here



Leila McKinnon with Ted and Gwendolen

Her own childhood Christmases were spent mostly in New Zealand, where the scent from the real Christmas tree in the living room started a Yuletide tradition that she honours to this day. Yet there are two McKinnon family traditions which have been jettisoned since Leila McKinnon's youth. "One year, Dad challenged Mum to a trifle making competition, with a secret ballot," says the *Inside Story* presenter. "She won hands down and Dad has never tried again. We've also dispensed with the Christmas Day family Trivial Pursuit marathon. It always seemed to end in tears." Donning a '50s-inspired frock and coaxing her two kids, Ted, three, and Gwendolen, 18 months, into an elf outfit and reindeer costume respectively for *The Weekly*'s cameras, Leila said she and husband David Gyngell were delighted to be creating some memories both would live to regret on their 18th birthdays. And what does the popular TV presenter want for Christmas this year? "A sleep in," she replied drily. ➤

HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY NORMAN GONZALES. LEILA WEARS KAREN MILLEN DRESS AND WITTNER SHOES. CHRISTMAS TREE FROM MYER AND DECORATIONS FROM PAPIER D'AMOUR.



HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY KELLY TAPP. JESSICA WEARS RACHEL GILBERT DRESS AND NINE WEST SHOES. ALLEGRA AND GISELLE'S DRESSES FROM ZARA. CHRISTMAS TREE AND DECORATIONS FROM TARGET. CHAIR FROM RUBY STAR TRADERS.



Peter Overton and Jessica Rowe with Allegra and Giselle

Nine Network news presenter Peter Overton is itching for his Christmas break this year. Donning our Santa suit for this Yuletide photo shoot proved to be a scratchy decision for the occasional *60 Minutes* reporter. "In fact, I think it gave me a rash," he says, posing with wife Jessica Rowe, co-host on Network Ten's *Studio 10*, and daughters Allegra, eight, and Giselle, six. "Usually, I'd ask to buy the clothes I wear in a *Women's Weekly* shoot, but this time, I think not." Peter and Jessica are taking the girls to Singapore for Christmas this year, a departure from their traditional family Christmas in Sydney. Yet they're not leaving everything behind. Peter will still hand out the presents from under the tree on Christmas morning. "It might sound a little daggy," says Peter, "but the girls love it and so do I." ➤



Kylie Gillies with Gus and Archie

What does time-poor Seven Network host Kylie Gillies love about Christmas? The delicious fact that nobody in her family needs to be anywhere at a particular time. Kylie is married to fellow journalist Tony Gillies and between their careers, two fine athletic boys – Gus, 12, and Archie, 10 – and dog Pepe, their lives are hectic. "The four of us spend our year running in a million different directions, so Christmas is the time I look forward to just spending time with the family," says Kylie. She also looks forward to overindulging on her mother's home-made rum balls and Rocky Road chocolate, transported from Kylie's home town, Tamworth, in northern NSW. And the Gillies' favourite tradition? Paper hats. "We do actually wear those paper hats you get in the bon-bons. Guaranteed to flatten any Chrissy hair-do. And we read aloud the jokes, too." ■

HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY KELLY TAPP. KYLIE WEA… UMPER AND ZARA JEANS, GUS AND ARCHIE WEAR ZARA JUMPERS AND SEED JEANS. TREE AND DECORATIONS FRO… CHRISTMAS BUNTING AND REINDEER FROM PAPIER D'AMOUR.


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* Knapen, J et al. (2013) Three-year low-dose menaquinone-7 supplementation helps decrease bone loss in healthy postmenopausal women, 24:2499-2507. Study funded by Nattopharma ASA. Kanellakis, S. (2012) Changes in parameters of bone metabolism in postmenopausal women following a 12-month intervention period using dairy products enriched with calcium, vitamin D, and phylloquinone or menaquinone: The postmenopausal health study II. All authors state no conflict of interest. CHC70307-02/15

Nature's Way

Maureen Boyce was an in-demand model in her early 20s, and was still turning heads as a glamorous socialite (below).

DEATH OF A socialite





It's the murder trial that has all of Brisbane talking. How did a popular socialite and devoted mother of two come to be found dead in her apartment with a stab wound to her stomach? And exactly what was the relationship between her and the man accused of her murder? **Clair Weaver** reports.

SHE WAS THE original Elle Macpherson: a golden blonde poster girl whose easy smile and tanned bikini body attracted thousands of tourists to the Gold Coast in the 1970s.

As a fresh-faced and leggy young model, she rose from twirling in fashion parades in her native Brisbane to modelling designer wear in front of Princess Anne and strutting the catwalks of London and New York, where she captivated the likes of legendary designer Valentino. ➤

MAIN IMAGE SUPPLIED AND USED WITH PERMISSION. NEWSPIX.



In happier times: (from left) Zachary, Graham, Maureen and Angelique at a family lunch.

Most recently, Maureen Boyce (nee Madden) was best known as a high-profile socialite and fashionista on the Brisbane social and racing circuits. At 68, she had maintained her striking looks and model physique, flamboyant style and effervescent personality.

Kind-hearted and fun-loving, she was happily married to Dr Graham Boyce, a GP, and devoted to their children: a handsome son, Zachary, who is a doctor due to graduate as a dermatologist next year, and her newlywed doppelgänger daughter Angelique, who works as a senior business banker.

In family photos, you can see the warmth, closeness and pride.

Yet out of the blue last month came shocking news – Maureen had been found dead with a knife wound to her abdomen, in her luxury multi-million dollar apartment overlooking the Brisbane River, in the wealthy enclave of Kangaroo Point.

A 63-year-old American man called Thomas Chris Lang, a retired doctor based in New Zealand who had been staying at Maureen's four-bedroom home, alerted police to her death. After extensive questioning, he was arrested and charged with her murder.

News reports have made much of the fact that Maureen and Lang had been in a relationship in the US about 40 years ago, after which they fell out of touch. It's understood Maureen had re-established platonic contact in recent years, after she had been contacted by Lang's mother, with whom she'd continued to exchange annual greetings.

Maureen's family say she was "deeply in love and committed to" her husband, Graham, and was looking forward to the next stage of their life together, during which they planned to divide their time between Australia and France.

However, Lang reportedly told American relatives he and Maureen had rekindled their romance, become engaged and had been due to marry last year. Problem is, of course, Maureen was already married and Lang was staying in her spare room.

Maureen had been found dead with a knife wound to her abdomen, in her luxury apartment.

Murder, said a pathologist, was the most likely explanation for her death.

*****

NEWS OF MAUREEN'S death sent shockwaves through Brisbane's social set. And her bereft family was left grappling with the sudden loss of a woman who would always fill a room with "sunshine, life and happiness".

The Boyce family has spoken to *The Weekly* to pay tribute to a woman whom they emphasise was so much more than her exuberant public persona. "She was not only a beauty on the outside," says son Zachary, "but also within."

In a terrible twist, Maureen has been narrowly robbed of the chance to meet her first grandchild. *The Weekly* understands that her daughter, Angelique, is pregnant with her first child – an occasion that would undoubtedly have brought so much joy. Maureen was also looking forward to seeing Zachary graduate as a dermatologist next year.

At social functions, Maureen was most often seen as a colourful and larger-than-life presence. Poised and self-assured, she could pull off a daring skin-tight red dress with leopard-print boots – even in her late 60s. Over the years, remembers long-time friend Dale Olsson, she would blow away the judges with her statement style in Fashions on the Field competitions. Today, however, her family, who are "devastated beyond words at the sudden, unexpected, tragic death of our beloved mother and wife", also remember a gentle and religious woman.

"Mum was loved by all she touched with her kind-hearted, generous and friendly nature," says Zachary, with Angelique and their father, Graham, in a family statement. "She was always there for all of us whenever we needed her, able to reassure, comfort and advise. with unconditional love and affection."

Indeed, her family tells how Maureen sacrificed her high-flying modelling career in her 20s in New York, while still at the height of her earning power, to return to Australia and help care for her seriously ill father. Likewise, she quit part-time modelling to be a full-time mother to her children.

In many ways, Maureen led a privileged life of high society parties, seafood dinners and island holidays. She and Graham had put their apartment up for sale this year with an original asking price of $3.7 million. Once they had secured a contract, they were planning on travelling to France to celebrate and look for a property to buy as a second home.

Yet Maureen did not lead a shallow existence, says her family. "A little known aspect of Mum was her deeply held religious beliefs, never travelling without her Bible: a book that she read daily without exception," says Zachary, "and [she] was a regular church attendee, including the Sunday before her tragic passing."

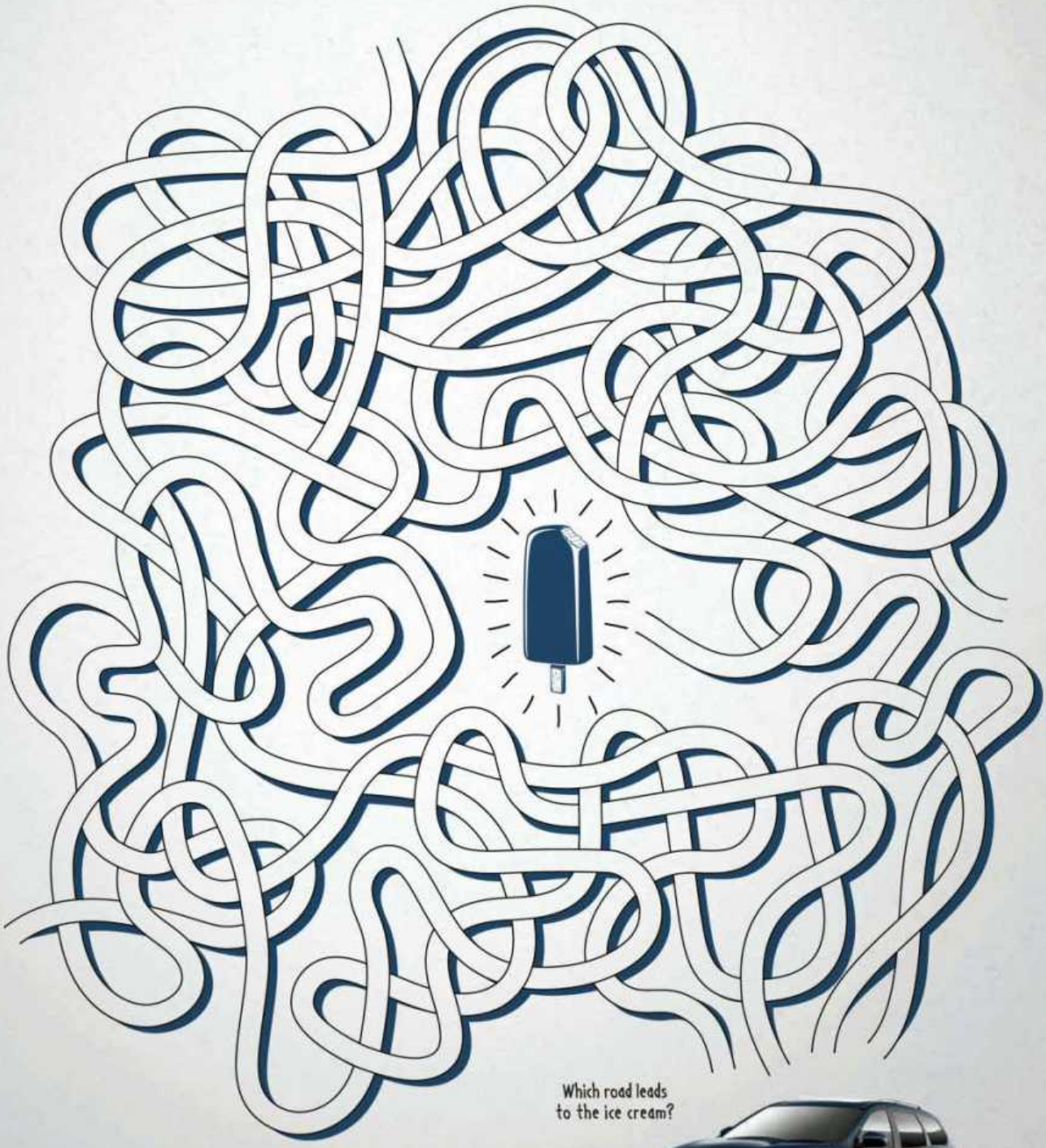
"She would never pass a homeless person on the street without reaching into her ➤

IMAGE SUPPLIED AND USED WITH PERMISSION.

NISSAN PATHFINDER

DISTRACTIVITY

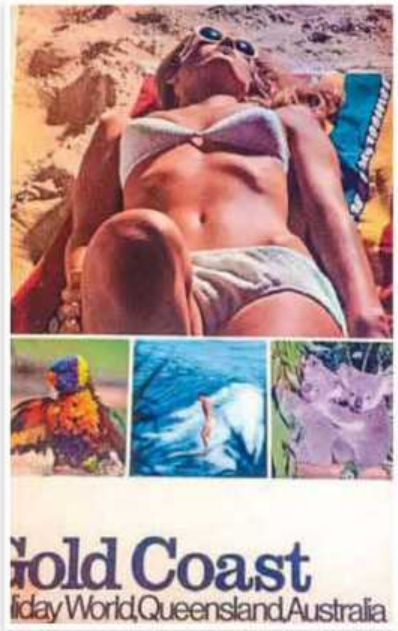
Use this to keep your little darlings busy while you catch up on all the latest



Which road leads to the ice cream?



PTH047DMZLAT







Above: Maureen on the iconic 1970 Gold Coast Tourism poster. Right: Maureen modelling in 1971. Below: With daughter Angelique enjoying the Melbourne Cup at Flemington, in 2002.

purse to give them a helping hand and she despised injustice of any form."

Family was equally important. "Even though, in recent years, Dad's work has meant he lived in Cairns much of the time, Mum and Dad were so close, talking on the phone multiple times per day," says Zachary. "[They] remained deeply in love and committed to each other, frequently visiting and enjoying each other's company. For the last two years, Mum has spent most of her time in Cairns with Dad in a happy, loving relationship."

Friends of Maureen were apparently unaware of Lang's existence, noting she hadn't been as active on the social scene because she had spent so much time in Cairns. When Graham posted a photo on Facebook of himself looking dapper in a suit and hat on a balcony last year, Maureen left him a flirty comment, "Looking hot!"

*****

BORN AND RAISED in Brisbane, Maureen grew into a bright young woman who loved surfing, water-skiing and sunbaking. After finishing her studies, she worked as a secretary at Brisbane City Council, where her dad was chief industrial chemist. At 18, she began modelling and her beauty would soon prove just as suited to a relaxed surf shoot as it was to high glamour and runways.

A photo of 21-year-old Maureen lying on a towel in a white towelling bikini became an iconic billboard poster for Gold Coast Tourism. A press release from the city council in 1970 heralded Maureen as the star of the by then famous image.

"Maureen is in great demand for television appearances and in a wide variety of photographic work and modelling," it stated. "A highlight of her career was her selection in the team of mannequins to show off Australia's latest 'gear' at the Royal Fashion Parade attended by Princess Anne in Brisbane recently."

"She was a very elegant model," says Brisbane style maven Di Cant. "Maureen was one of the favourites in the 1970s. She was a bright and vivacious sort of girl, and had a very charming personality."

Debbie Miller, who modelled with Maureen in 1969 and 1970, remembers a warm-hearted young woman who loved to kick up her heels. "Modelling was very glamorous in those days," Debbie tells *The Weekly*. "We were taken overseas and treated like princesses. Maureen was lovely and bubbly, full of personality and a lot of fun. We travelled in a big group with the mayor, his wife and a big entourage. We'd be on the front page of the newspaper and on TV – it was all very exciting."

Maureen's aspirations to work overseas came true: she jetted off to New York, London and Houston. "When in the United States, she was Valentino's favourite model," says Zachary, "and in Australia a special favourite of [designer] George Gross and Myer. She was indeed a supermodel, before the term was even created."

*****

DALE OLSSON, WHO is the owner of high-end Brisbane millinery shop The Hat Box, cancelled her annual trip to the Melbourne Cup this year so she could attend her friend's church funeral the following day.

It was bittersweet timing: the friends first met at the races in their 20s. And in a parallel world, they could have been dressing up in frocks and fascinators, laughing over flutes of champagne and casting an expert eye over Fashion on the Field.

Instead, alongside Maureen's grieving family, Dale was remembering her friend to the music of a series of aptly chosen songs, including *The Way We Were*, *Time To Say Goodbye* and *Oh, Pretty Woman*.

"Maureen's favourite saying was, 'The show must go on!'," recalls Dale. "Of course, the show will go on. But the show won't be the same without Maureen." ■

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PTH0470/GBF

Ti model shown. *Ti model only. †ST-L Option Pack and Ti models only.

The Spirit of Christmas

In the whirl of Yuletide madness, it's easy to lose track of the reason for the season. **Sue Smethurst** asks four stars to recall their fondest Christmas memory.

STYLING BY **MATTIE CRONAN**



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BREW-BEVAN. HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY EVE GUNSON. CHRISSIE WEARS MAGGIE T SHIRT AND DENISE CRONAN CUSTOM BALL SKIRT. SHOT ON LOCATION AT MELBOURNE CHRISTMAS TREE FARM. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.



CHRISSIE SWAN

My favourite memories always involve my childhood Christmases in Brisbane with my grandmother. We lived in Melbourne when I was growing up, but every year, we'd pile into the car and drive to Brisbane to be with Gran at Christmas. My sisters and I were squashed in the back seat, Mum and Dad in the front, Dad driving, of course. Dad and his brothers always raced to see who could get to Brissy first, so toilet stops were planned with lightning precision. We did it one year without stopping at all – I think it was 18 hours' driving, as the family legend goes. In every way in the '70s, we cheated death! Gran had a three-bedroom house and we all squashed in, she baked amazing scones, even if it was 50°C. It was always exciting to be at her house and my older sisters kept the dream alive for me, making reindeer noises in the night, and Mum painted reindeer hooves on the front lawn with carpet foam. The standout year at Gran's was when I got my Fuzzy Pumper Barber Shop, it's a Play-Doh thing. You push the Play-Doh in and it makes hair that you can cut. I cried when I got it, I wanted it *so* much! I still have it and my kids play with it now. We lived your classic Aussie Christmas and I treasure those memories.

✻ *Chrissie will present breakfast radio on Nova 100 in 2016.*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BREW-BEVAN. HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY CHARLIE KIELTY. RACHAEL WEARS DANIEL AYAKIAN CUSTOM GOWN. SHOT ON LOCATION AT COOGEE BEACH, NSW.



RACHAEL FINCH

For me, it was Christmas 2013, the first Christmas my husband, Michael, and I spent with our daughter, Violet. She was only three months old, but we felt like a "real" family for the first time. Violet was too little to understand what all of the fuss was about. For her, it was all about the colourful, crunchy wrapping paper! Christmases changed when Violet came along, everything from the way we shopped to the food we ate and the music we listened to was different – everything was about her and we loved it. She's two years old now and very aware. She will understand more of the festivity of Christmas this year. Each year becomes more joyous with her. We will have a big family Christmas – we're like the Brady Bunch when we all get together and I love it. I wouldn't have it any other way!

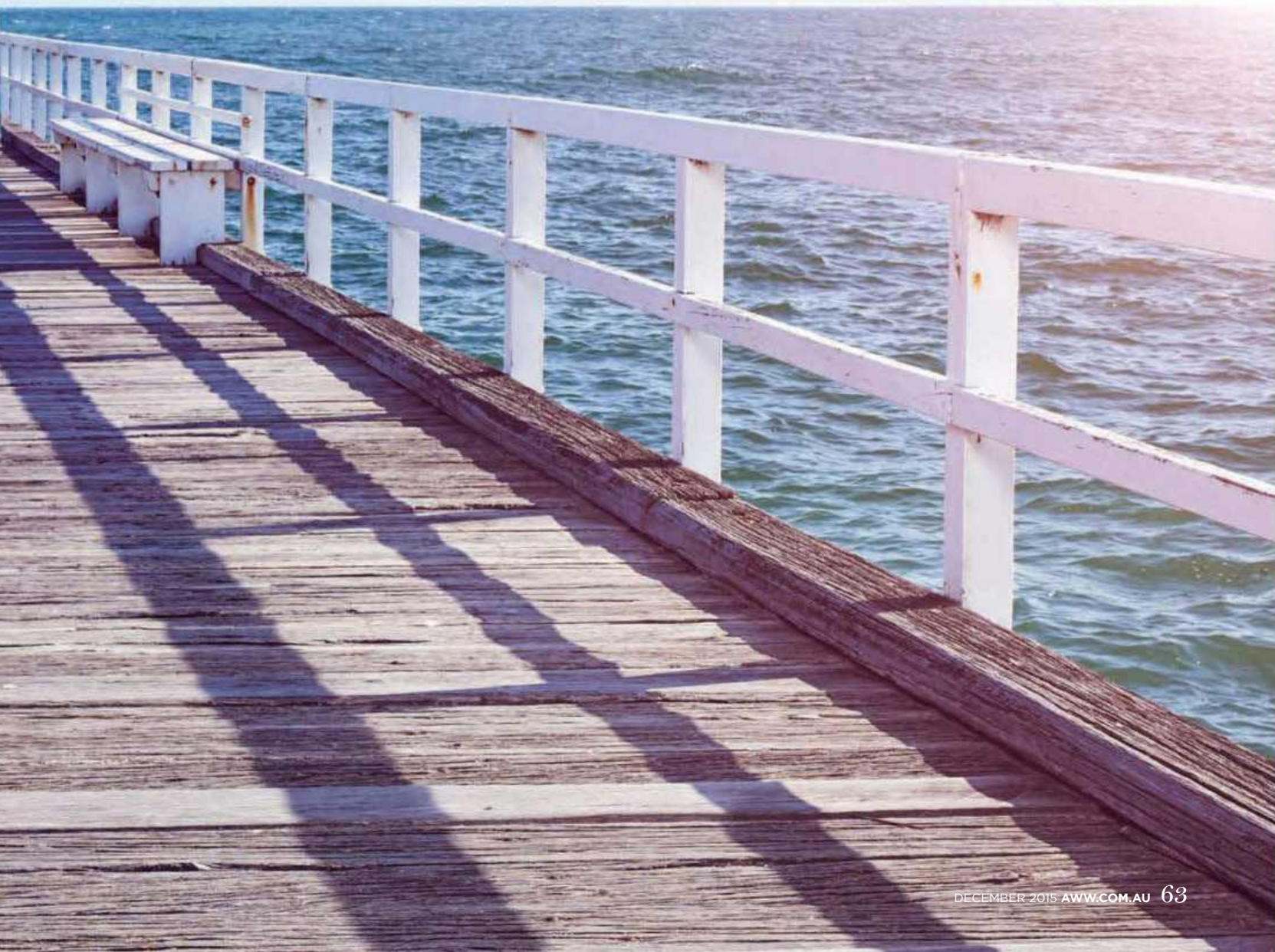


PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BREW-BEVAN. HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY JULIE PROVIS. LISA WEARS MICHAEL LO SORDO DRESS (TOP) AND RACHEL GILBERT SKIRT. SHOT ON LOCATION AT KERFERD ROAD PIER, ALBERT PARK, VICTORIA.

LISA McCUNE

Christmas of 2001 is treasured for me. It was my first Christmas with my eldest, Archer, who is now 14. He was six months old at the time and didn't really understand what was going on, but I remember the expressions on his face, that beautiful sense of wonderment. We gave him a sit-in play pen – it was his first big colourful plastic toy and he stayed in it all day! Then along came Oliver, 12, and Remy, 10, and Christmas became all about family. Children make you stop and savour the moment, which is lovely. It is now very much a family day for us. Lunch is the focus and I love cooking. I do a lot of the Christmas cooking and I love that Christmas goes for a few days so you get to share meals with everyone you love.

✻ ***Lisa stars in*** **The Divorce** ***on ABC TV in December.***



JESSICA MAUBOY

Conjuring memories of Christmases past is a sensory experience for Darwin-born-and-bred songstress Jessica Mauboy. It's the pungent smell of the Top End's "big wet", the aroma of roast turkey, satay chicken and shrimp paste curry from her mother's kitchen, the sound of her father telling one of his interminably long stories and the music from her uncle's guitar. "It's family, pure and simple," says Jessica. "It's being at home with my mob. It's eating until you explode. It's seeing the look of satisfaction on Mum's face when guests are filling takeaway containers on their way home, to have as leftovers on Boxing Day." And it's faith. "I remember being an angel in a nativity play – I was so proud of my white, puffed sleeves. The belief and courage that came from the Bible was everything to us as a family. It's still an important part of who I am today."

✻ ***Jessica's new single*** **This Ain't Love** ***is out now.***

"Christmas is family, pure and simple. It's being at home with my mob. It's eating until you explode."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX DOYLE. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY VICTORIA BARON. JESSICA WEARS NERIDA WINTER AND EMMA LUNN CUSTOM CORSAGE AND SILK SKIRT. SHOT ON LOCATION AT ULURU-KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK

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The festive BLUES



If it's the season to be jolly, why do so many of us want to hide under our doonas until January? **Susan Horsburgh** reports on the festive funk.

ON TV, CHRISTMAS is all wide-eyed, appreciative children opening their perfect, yearned-for presents on a twinkly, magical morning. In reality, you're catatonic after a midnight gift-wrapping marathon, you've forgotten to buy the requisite two dozen AA batteries, and you can't dislodge the Barbie sewn into its box.

The first child has cracked it by 5.20am after comparing her booty with her big sister's – and, to make matters worse, you're being assaulted by non-stop images of family perfection on your Facebook feed, making you think it's only you who wants to put their kids on the nature strip, along with the half-tonne of primary-coloured plastic that's just invaded the house. By 7am, the only thing you have to look forward to is your annual stoush with chauvinistic Uncle Nev, which is always good sport after seven or eight sauv blancs.

Now, if that sounds cynical, it probably is, but there is no denying that Christmas inspires fear and loathing. Australia apparently isn't big on this kind of research, but a US Christmas study last year found that a quarter of respondents dread seeing their relatives, while more than a third worry about going into debt. In the UK, almost a quarter of over-65s fear the loneliness and sad memories conjured up by Christmas.

"Christmas means different things to different people – a time of spirituality, personal reflection on the year gone by, holidays, family time, loneliness, managing tricky relationships, gift-giving, grieving," says psychologist Sabina Read. "Depending on what Christmas represents in our minds, the so-called festive season may be anything but celebratory."

"The reality is that there's no such thing as a functional family."

High expectations don't help. For most of us, Christmas is a magical time when we're kids, but it loses its sparkle as we get older. Still, we feel the pressure to enjoy it like we once did. And enforced frivolity is no fun at all – like having to use a penis straw at a hen's party, stone-cold sober.

There's a good reason why we only see some of our relatives once a year, and yet we insist on trying to play happy families, donning the paper hats and reading out the corny jokes, even as some of those around the table suppress grievances they've been cultivating for decades. The fantasy of family togetherness often collides with the dysfunctional reality – and yet we still nurse the hope that next Christmas will be different. ➤

GETTY IMAGES. IMAGE POSED FOR BY MODEL NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE STORY.

"People invest such a lot into this one day of the year and what it means," says Sue Yorston, of Relationships Australia Victoria. "We try very hard to make it picture-perfect. We have got family members that don't get on and yet we expect that they will, that one day of the year. We can't control that, and when we can't, we feel it all falls apart."

Sue recalls one family coming to her organisation for mediation after a Christmas Day blow-up. The father had died two decades earlier and tensions had simmered away ever since, with some family members believing the mother hadn't followed their dad's funeral wishes. It all boiled over that Christmas Day.

"The family had sat on that for 20 years and never spoken about it," recalls Sue, who advises families to address their issues any day except Christmas.

"Those underlying resentments are there, and it's when you bring together all these people who wouldn't choose to be together, and then add too much to drink and high expectations, that someone might say something that triggers it off … The reality is that there's no such thing as a totally functional family. Each family is unique, made up of unique human beings who have to try to get on with each other."

Visiting parents and siblings as adults often sparks childhood memories, says Sabina, "which can lead us to revert back to past – and sometimes dysfunctional – family roles and patterns that we thought we'd left behind".

This means that I go home for Christmas and promptly turn into a rodeo clown. As the youngest of five kids, I have no hope of credibility, so the best I can aim for is entertainment value.

And I'm allegedly a grown-up. I know this because I have been stockpiling my kids' Christmas presents for months. Most mums I know are their family's chief Christmas co-ordinator, and many of them hate it, especially when it feels like their whole family's festive happiness hinges solely on one woman's cooking, gift-buying and organisational abilities.



TIPS FOR A HAPPIER CHRISTMAS

- Lower your expectations.
- Create family traditions, such as a post-lunch walk, cricket match or trivia quiz, which can release tension and provide fun distractions.
- If the family can't be together without fighting, skip the gathering altogether.
- Have a casual family get-together, such as a barbecue at the beach, a week or two before Christmas, so expectations aren't so high.
- Avoid known triggers, so if politics is a touchy subject in your family, for example, don't bring it up – or change the topic if someone else does.
- Make sure everybody brings something, so the family gets to work as a team and one person doesn't have to carry the burden of playing host.
- Loved ones who have died should be acknowledged, perhaps with a toast or by sharing funny stories about them.
- In separated families, encourage the children to have contact with both parents, even if it's by phone or email, and make sure they feel free to contact relatives on both sides of the family.
- Avoid difficult situations that you feel you won't be able to cope with – don't set yourself up to fail.
- If you're alone, go to the movies or round up other "orphans" for a picnic in the park – work out what you need to do for yourself to make it an okay day.

If we can let go of the elaborate Christmas ideal, the solution is to simplify: ditch the starched tablecloth and plum pudding for a casual barbie in the park, so no one has the burden of playing host; work out a Kris Kringle system, so no one has to go broke ticking off a lengthy gift list.

"Learn to let go of the 'shoulds' and reset more realistic expectations – which may involve some tension, hurt, or overcooked turkey," says Sabina. "There is no magic recipe for the perfect Christmas. And when in doubt, remember it's only one day – and this, too, will pass."

For those wrestling with grief, financial strain or rocky relationships, though, Christmas can be a tipping point. "It's not Christmas in itself that creates the distress; it's the other things happening in a person's life," says Lifeline Research Foundation Executive Director Alan Woodward. "It's a time of year that really stretches people. For those already feeling lonely, it's a profound pointer to their social isolation."

That sense of disconnection can be dangerous, he says. "Suicidal behaviour can be fuelled by profound loneliness: 'I'm alone in this world, nobody cares'. It's not just about living alone; it's being unable to have an effective relationship with those around you … I know there are people who call Lifeline at this time of year who might not have otherwise called."

Which is all the more reason to reach out this Christmas. Calls for help to the Salvation Army more than triple over the festive season, and heightened family violence means more demand for emergency shelter. The charity relies on an ever-increasing influx of volunteers to help at Christmas dinners, for example, or to collect and wrap donated toys.

"We see more and more people with their kids helping the Salvos," says the Salvation Army's Bruce Redman. "They're using it to give their kids a reality check, to give back, to help someone who's doing it tough. Amid the madness of life, they want to take some time out and think about other people. They're thinking, let's get back to being human, taking someone's hand and saying, 'Happy Christmas – I hope it's a better year next year'." ■

● If you feel lonely or in need of help, call Lifeline on 13 11 14, The Salvation Army on 13 72 58, or beyondblue on 1300 224 636.

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The ultimate GIFT GUIDE

ANTHEA LOUCAS

Editor, Gourmet Traveller

Why did you pick these gifts? I am a sucker for handmade ceramics and Bridget Bodenham is one of my favourites so I can't go past those espresso cups. And who wouldn't want a tangerine ice-cream maker for summer? The *Gourmet Traveller* Christmas hamper is a no-brainer, filled with our favourite treats, from Baker D. Chirico's gingerbread stars to a Dessertmakers sour cherry pudding. The State Of Escape neoprene bag is perfect for the beach – I'll throw in those fab Bailey Nelson sunglasses.

What will be the big trends in food and travel next year? Health-driven food options will become more prevalent in restaurants, in a market where diners are demanding light, fresh food through a fun dining experience. In travel, the cruising sector is an unstoppable force.

How will you spend Christmas this year? We'll be around the pool eating spit-roasted lamb. We're the definition of multicultural – my immediate family is Greek-Cypriot-Australian, other family members hail from Croatia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Canada and my hubby is from Zimbabwe.

1

2

10

9

Anthea's gift list 1. **Vintage Ladies Classic Plus bike, $249.99,** reidcycles.com.au. 2. **State Of Escape bag in Grey, $299,** stateofescape.com.au. 3. **Claude sunglasses in Mahogany, $145,** baileynelson.com.au. 4. **Electrolux Masterpiece Collection immersion blender in Bronze, $395,** davidjones.com.au. 5. **Bridget Bodenham cups, $35 each,** bridgetbodenhamceramics.bigcartel.com. 6. **Jug in Seed Green, $165,** koskela.com.au. 7. **House Of Arras Rosé, $80,** danmurphys.com.au. 8. **Cuisinart ice-cream maker in Papaya, $129,** cuisinart.com.au. 9. **Cockatoo plate, $80,** bonnieandneil.com.au. 10. **Gourmet Traveller Christmas hamper, $195,** gourmettraveller.com.au/snowgoose. ➤

See all of these gifts up close at aww.com.au.

HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY NICOLA JOHNSON. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE. ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE WHERE WEBSITES ARE QUOTED.

As editors of the country's leading magazines, they're the taste-makers of all things stylish – so who better to ask for tips on what to give at Christmas?

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAMIAN BENNETT**
STYLING BY **HANDE RENSHAW**



DEB BIBBY

Editor-In-Chief, Real Living

Tell us about your gift guide: The Twiggy image and "The Dreamers and Me" tea towel by Rachel Castle (I would frame the tea towel, it's too cool to use on dishes) would bring any interior to life, plus it's about the only art I could afford and every home needs some form of art. They both make me smile. Plus a string of lights is so welcoming – a must-have for indoors or out.

Describe your ideal Christmas: It's the perfect sunny day, the table is laid to casual perfection, the turkey, the ham and the pav have all turned out beautifully, the cocktails are flowing and The Afro-Cuban All Stars tunes are up loud, all the oldies and the kids are dancing! Before the sun goes down we all head to the beach to catch some waves. Back home salty and happy, collapse exhausted on the sofa. That's my perfect Christmas.

How will you be spending Christmas this year? Hang on, just going to call everyone and check ...

What are going to be the big trends in homes next year? Buff-coloured leather, bleached timbers, all things handmade and beautiful pottery pieces. Chalky pastels mixed together in a delicious jumble of colour, blush, mauve and sand. Nordic whites and greys in all shades. Mixed metallic – brass, copper and rose gold, concrete vases, pendants, storage vessels with hints of copper. Lighting in geometric forms and playful disc shapes. Hang them low over dining and coffee tables.



HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY KELLY TAPP.



Deb's gift list

1. Twiggy print, $195, formanpictureframing.com.au.
2. Conical flask candle, $39, alchemyprodux.com.
3. Smeg two-slice toaster in Red, $179, davidjones.com.au.
4. Blue Coastal Stripe Turkish beach towel, $55, bloomandco.com.au.
5. String lights in Copper, from $39, thewoodsfolk.com.au.
6. Earl Grey & Cucumber Cologne, 100ml, $185, jomalone.com.au.
7. The Dreamers and Me tea towel, $69, castleandthings.com.au.
8. Tumbler side table in Brass, $199.95, westelm.com.au.
9. Confetti floor cushions, $49 each, olliella.com.au. ➤

7
8
9

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KELLIE HUSH *Editor-In-Chief, Harper's Bazaar*

Tell us about your gift guide: My big Christmas gift this year is a renovated house, although I'm not likely to take delivery until July 2016. That still hasn't stopped me from furnishing it before it is even close to being finished. I love the linen-covered armchairs from MCM House as they are perfect for the basement room we are building for the family to chill out in. I'm also stockpiling new linen and towels, so I'd be very happy to find Missoni towels under the tree.

How will you be spending Christmas this year? We will be heading up to my brother and sister-in-law's home on Sydney's northern beaches. We are a close-knit family so we all move in for a few days – four adults, four kids, Gran Lee, two dogs and a cat. It doesn't sound like it, but it is heaven. Drinking French champagne, jumping in the pool and heading to Freshwater Beach for a surf with the kids. And there's always a lot of laughter and love.

What are the trends for fashion next year? Shock horror, there is going to be a lot of colour! There was a lot of experimentation with colour and prints at the Spring/Summer collection shows in Milan and Paris recently. Gucci did not put one black dress on the runway, which is rare in fashion.

Kellie's gift list

1. **Mantis floor lamp BS1, $1830,** spenceandlyda.com.au.
2. **Joe occasional armchair in Smoke, $1350,** mcmhouse.com.
3. **Pom Pom tote, $90,** www.myislandhome.com.au.
4. **Hatmaker hat by Jonathan Howard, POA,** hatmaker.com.au.
5. **Silk sleep mask in Black, $39.95,** slip.com.au.
6. **Banana Leaf Summer Pyjamas, $219,** masiniandchern.com.au.
7. **Leather monogrammed pouch in Pale Pink, $89.95,** thedailyedited.com.
8. **Missoni Home Lara #170 bath sheet, $205,** spenceandlyda.com.au.
9. **Ceramic curved teapot, $100, from Koskela,** koskela.com.au. ➤

HAIR BY BRAD MULLINS. MAKE-UP BY NICOLA JOHNSON.

See all of these gifts up close at aww.com.au.

JUSTINE CULLEN *Editor-In-Chief, Elle*

Tell me about your selected gifts, why you chose them and for whom they would be perfect? Beautiful cookbooks and chic, luxurious beach towels are always my perfect fallback gift for anyone. When it comes to children, I will do anything to encourage mine to play outside, so I opt for surfboards, skateboards, wheelboards – anything that's not screen related. And the perfect Zimmermann summer dress? Well, that's more about self-gifting ...

Describe your ideal Christmas. Wake up in my home surrounded by visiting family, give out a ridiculous amount of presents, sing along with Bing Crosby loudly (and badly), cook all morning (powered by a few Bellinis) and eat, drink and be merry until it's time to pass out on the beach.

What are the big fashion trends next year? This is the season of maximalism – ornate detailing, ruffles, romanticism, voluminous sleeves, pretty colour, sequins and sparkle, metallics, stripes. It's a beautiful time to be a bower bird.

See all of these gifts up close at aww.com.au.



Justine's gift list

1. **Ancient Times Turkish cotton beach towel, $119,** ponyrider.com.au.
2. **La Rose tea rose violet geranium candle, $69,** maisonbalzac.com.
3. **Chanel nail polishes, $39 each,** davidjones.com.au.
4. **R.M. Williams Yearling Adelaide boots, $475,** rmwilliams.com.au.
5. ***Nopi: The Cookbook* by Yotam Ottolenghi and Ramael Scully, $59.99,** and ***Mexico From The Inside Out* by Enrique Olvera, $97.94,** kinokuniya.com.au.
6. **Harlequin plant stand, $190, and Nightshade pot, $95,** ivymuse.com.au.
7. **Leather notebook holder in Pale Pink, $69.95,** thedailyedited.com.
8. **Tangiers sequin and stripe cushion, $125,** rubystartraders.com.au.
9. **Hypto Krypto surfboard, $995, from Haydenshapes,** haydenshapes.com.
10. **Alchemy embroidery long dress, $1100,** zimmermannwear.com.

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E. Jonathan Adler iPad mini 3 Cases **$29.99ea.** JA15Ø37GBK **F.** Photobooks* **from $15.50ea.** KOD8X6PPB

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LISA GREEN

Editor-In-Chief, House & Garden

Tell us about your gift list: I love the hand-drawn outdoor fabrics from local design company Utopia Goods. Armadillo & Co rugs are art for the floor and the designs are developed with Indian weavers. Books and "bored" games are a must.

What will be the big trends in homes next year? Life is so fast-paced and we need our homes to be (well-organised!) sanctuaries offering privacy and retreat. We also crave a connection with the outdoors. Internal courtyards tick a few boxes – bringing light in, creating a view, providing the opportunity for greenery – and are a big home design trend. The calibre of outdoor furniture, fabrics, plant stands, lighting, fire and cooking zones is lifting accordingly.



Lisa's gift list **1. Tait terrace planter designed by Bernabeifreeman, $460, and self-watering pots, $20 each,** madebytait.com.au. **2. White scar porcelain bowl by Keiko Matsui, $300,** small-spaces.com.au. **3. *Mid-Century Modern Patterns Colouring Book*, $19,** artgallery.nsw.gov.au. **4. *Great Australian Gardens*, $59.95,** magshop.com.au. **5. Bang & Olufsen Beoplay A2 bluetooth speaker, $579.95,** apple.com.au. **6. Mottlecah and Mallee Gum linen and cotton cushions, $85 each,** utopiagoods.com. **7. Butterfly rug, 1.4m x 2m, $630,** armadillo-co.com. **8. Games Compendium Collection, $89.95,** laura-ashley.com.au. **9. Sika Design Fox chair, $795, and ottoman, $595,** domo.com.au. **10. Framed acrylic on paper by John Reid, $2200,** small-spaces.com.au. ■

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Letter to my daughter

He never thought he'd be a dad and now he can't imagine not being one. Author **Gideon Haigh** pens an ode to his little girl.



Cecilia enjoys a big hug from her self-proclaimed "shabbily incompetent father", Gideon Haigh.

Dear Cecilia,

THE DAY AFTER I was born, my mother wrote me a letter about her feelings on the event of my birth to give to me on my twenty-first birthday. It's a lovely, precious thing, which I've lost. Or it's on my desk. As you know, that's tantamount to the same thing. Anyway, you're now five, and I'm doing something similar. What can I say? I'm slow. I also tend to need a reason to do stuff, and the gracious Women Of Letters have asked me to write about the woman who changed my life. Which is nice, actually. My life has been influenced and enriched by a host of women, from the girls I had unrequitable crushes on at school to the smart and savvy women who've shown me how to be a better journalistic tradesman.

Then, of course, there's your mum, who was courageous or foolhardy enough to agree to my impromptu marriage proposal in Darwin's Ducks Nuts bar in 2008. But have they changed my life? I'd like to say yes because that makes me sound a finer and more flexible person, but really I'm as easy to change as a billion dollar note. I'm a thirty-year drudge of journalism too far gone for reform ... well, perhaps not quite, because there's you.

Now, I don't want to conform to a cliché about the man who gains perspective from fatherhood. You'd know it would be an exaggeration. In some respects, I'm as inaccessible as ever. Upstairs in my study, there are times I might as well be on the dark side of the moon. At cricket thrice a week, it's as though I step into a parallel universe of boys talking shit about sport, to which women contribute chiefly by making salads and joining in karaoke. I can't even claim you were an act of genuine volition on my part. When your mum and I married in January 2009, we'd actually talked more about abortion than reproduction – although there's nothing weird about this. I'd been writing a book about abortion, which I dedicated to your mother, because she had been a willing helpmate in an intense and gruelling writing challenge. But you were always going to be born. Why? Because you sort of ... weren't real ... not, I think, for either of us. Your mum will tell you. About four months after we were married, I was away and she felt a bit weird, so she ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES GEER. STYLING BY KIM ELLMER. CECILIA WEARS DRESS FROM COUNTRY ROAD. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.



went to the supermarket, as you do, to buy some cigarettes; on the way something told her to visit the chemist for a pregnancy test. She took it once; she took it twice; she took it a third time. She never went back for those cigarettes. Obviously, for your mum, you became a growing corporeal reality.

Me? If I'm honest, I hardly thought about it. In my life, I had seemed likelier to become a Test cricketer than a father ... and that had never been remotely likely. As it was beyond the presumed limit of my abilities, it had come to sit quite naturally outside the scope of my aspirations. So I just assumed something would happen – not macabrely or anything like that. I simply thought: Okay, one morning I'll wake up and I'll be in a different body in a different solar system, and I'll get back to doing my work again.

I didn't always think that, of course. There were moments when the experience of being an expectant father became exciting and vivid – at the ultrasounds, at the prenatal classes. But I'm sorry, little girl, I was busy researching a book and therefore pursued by furies. I didn't read anything about pregnancy or childbirth or parenthood or masculinity or femininity. I didn't focus on cots or cribs or bed linen or baby clothes. I remember watching your mum making ready for you, like a bird building a nest. She made that little sign for your door with your name before you were born because, by that stage, we knew you were to be a girl. But I observed this with a kind of anthropological detachment. Nature's marvellous, I'd think. Then: Hmm, wonder why it's not really got a grip of me. Albeit that I harboured such thoughts only fleetingly because otherwise I did what I tend to do, which is put one foot in front of the other and plough my working furrow. That's my nature, sad to say. I'm a man of hidden shallows. I can't go through the motions of anything; I won't feign what I don't feel and I'm more or less incapable of hiding what's on my mind. I guess I also reasoned it out logically. Being a father would be so remote from my previous life that there was no point preparing for it.

I won't tell you about your birth here because, as fascinating as it was, it wasn't personally transformative – maybe it was for your mum, but for me, it was more like a white-knuckled ride down a roller-coaster: exciting but soon over. When did the change hit me? I can tell you exactly. As your mum was wheeled away to recover from her C-section, I was ushered through this labyrinth of corridors, where various checks and weighings were carried out. Then both of us were deposited in a waiting room, me holding you uneasily in your tiny swaddling clothes.

> "Just me and a newborn soul drawing its first breaths."

It was about 3am. The lights of the city burned outside, but we were enveloped in silence. They don't warn fathers about this. I mean, I paid attention in the prenatal classes. Never once was it mentioned it would be this way – just me and a newborn soul drawing its first breaths, tiny heart thrumming beneath a delicate breastbone, mouth a little moue of anticipation. And when I put my finger to your mouth – well, your ➤



JOANIE



WREN

THE WORK EDIT

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determined suction I'll never forget and my paroxysm of panic. I felt I could read your thoughts: Milk. They told me there'd be milk. I'm waiting. Who is this weedy guy anyway?

Logic kicked in, of course: Uh-huh, I get it. This is a reflex. It's what newborn infants do – pretty amazing really. For Christ's sake, you're a grown man. But there was no escaping it. There was another voice in my head now. It was saying: Your daughter is not even half an hour old and the first thing she wanted you couldn't provide. Welcome to a life of failure and guilt, in which the best you can do will never be good enough. And my word, I've felt that since – that absolute sense of helplessness and inadequacy, and, if I'm frank, the occasional hankering to flee it.

Now, I don't think you've induced these sensations, Cecilia; what you've done, really, is tap the reservoirs of failure and guilt already there, lurking beneath the shiny surface of professional proficiency. As a change, I guess it's more a reversion than a development – you've put me in touch with anxieties I've striven to distance myself from. What's surprised me a little, I guess, is that I've felt strangely ready to face them. Perhaps they weren't as formidable as I'd imagined. Not that I've developed any delusions of adequacy. If anything, disappointment nags me now more broadly and more constantly; it frightens me sometimes how the interior of my head turns into an echo chamber of self-recrimination. But I can live with it. That's a revelation of parenthood: no state is constant. Moods swing. Needs alter. The sun rises and sets. It's a sadness and a mercy. The anxiety I experience about being unable to meet any of your needs is seasoned with an awareness that if I could meet them all, your childhood would never end and you'd never have a life independent of mine.

> "The love I have for you is so unique in kind there should be a new word for it."

Lucky for us both, then, that I'm such a shabbily incompetent father. I tick the box as a provider; otherwise, I'm sloppy, absent-minded, all thumbs. Your mum is always snatching things out of my hands – I'll be about to put your shoes in the microwave or your bottle in the bin. I'm queasily conscious that you're not quite sure what I do around the place. The other day, I was putting you in the car seat and you said, "Dad, you don't drive."

I said, "No, Cecilia, I can't drive."

You said, "And you don't cook."

I said, "No, Cecilia, I can't cook."

You looked at me, thought a moment and then said, as if to encourage me, "But you can play cricket with your friends."

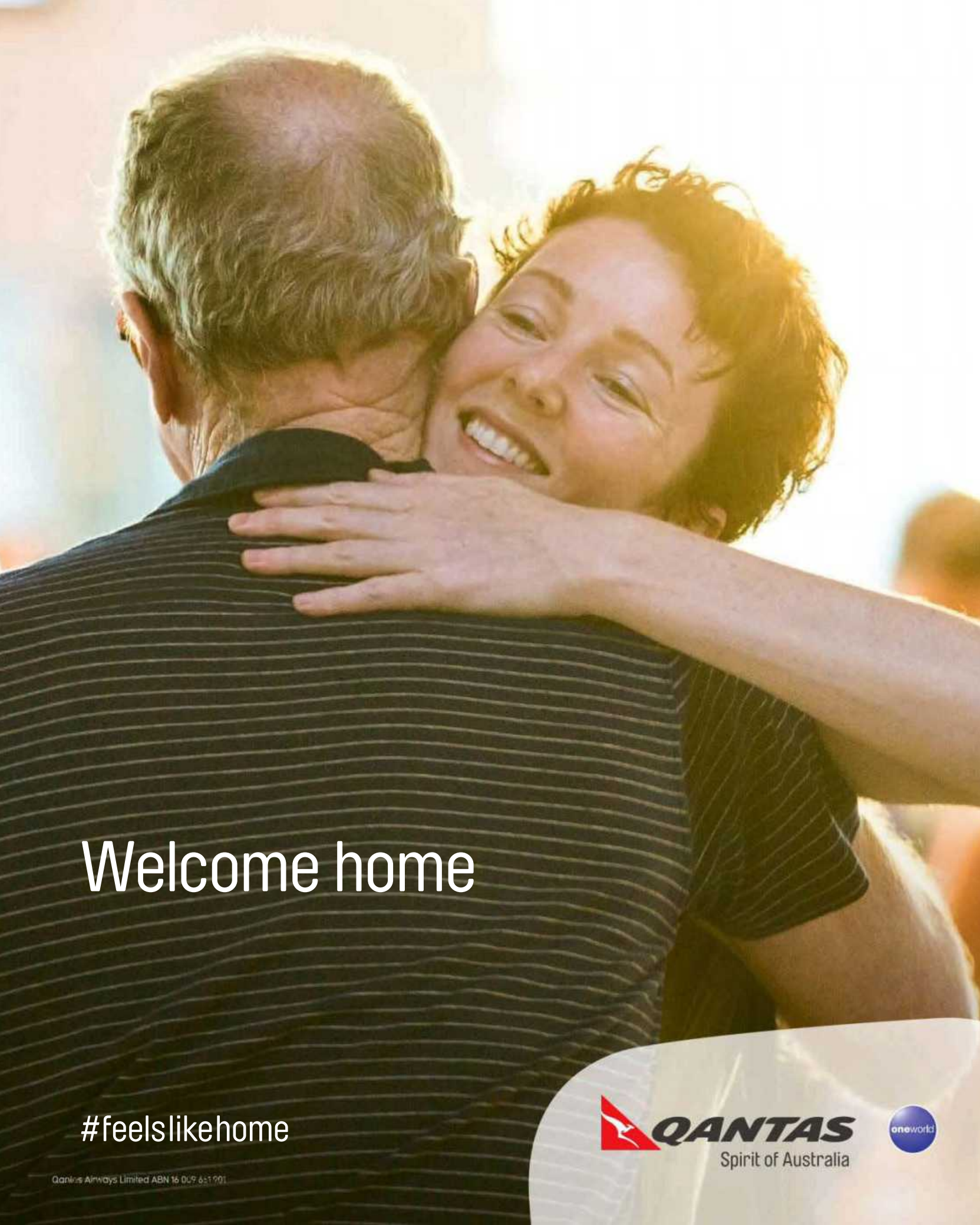
And now that you're a chatty, cheeky, mercurial, precocious five-year-old, you're always saying things to make me think. A few months ago, you challenged me to a running race in the kitchen and I let you come first. "I won!" you said. Then you looked at me and said, "You won too, Dad." One day, you'll learn the difference between winning and losing, and the loss of that innocence will cut me to the quick.

Last week, when we were at the museum, we saw a nineteenth-century lantern slide of two lions roaring at a cowering man. You asked me what the man was doing and I said he was showing fear. "What's fear, Dad?" you said. How to explain fear to a five-year-old? How to explain it to a 49-year-old?

I've gone this far and – isn't it funny – I find I've yet to use the word "love". That's because it doesn't seem adequate in its debauched modern currency. People talk now about how much they "love" their iPhones, how they "love" Twitter, or *Breaking Bad*, or Buddy Franklin. The love I have for you, little girl, is so unique in kind it feels like there should be a new word for it. At different times, I've examined love through a microscope and through a telescope. I see it now through a kaleidoscope – every time I look, it's different, while remaining uncannily vivid, illuminated. I want something now that expresses how stupidly I grin when I walk into our street at the prospect of seeing you, even if when I do, you probably won't look up from *Octonauts*; how inferior it can feel even to be writing about you when I could be watching you dance. Perhaps it condenses simply to the joy of signing this letter with a word I never thought I'd use about myself,

Dad

Gideon Haigh is a best-selling author and celebrated cricket writer. This is an edited extract from his contribution to *From The Heart: Women Of Letters* by Marieke Hardy and Michaela McGuire, published by Viking.


Welcome home
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The greatest GIFT

It was just a week before Christmas 1992 when tragedy struck for one Brisbane family. Yet, as **Bryce Corbett** discovers, this heartwrenching event left an astonishing legacy.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY RUSSELL SHAKESPEARE. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY GEMMA ELAINE AND MARIA RIVERA. STYLING BY STAV HORTIS AND LOUISE ROCHE. THROW RUG, TABLE SETTING, CUSHIONS AND GLASSWEAR FROM FREEDOM, FREEDOM.COM.AU. HEART BALLOONS FROM LOU'S BALLOONS, LOUSBALLOONS.COM.AU. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.

Two families brought together by tragedy and generosity of spirit. Seated at the table are Dianne and Terry, the protagonists of this tale.

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Nathan Westwood (below) was just 20 when he was involved in a car accident. His decision to donate his organs gave Terry Donovan (left, pictured as a young man with wife Nook) the gift of a heart.

TURN BACK TO the previous page and take a look at the photograph. It's a picture of an Aussie family at Christmas time. Mums, dads, grandmothers, sons, daughters – more cousins than you can poke a Christmas cracker at.

It may look for all the world like a typical family photograph. Except it's not.

Instead, it's a family portrait made possible by its one absent member. His name is Nathan. And while you won't see him in this photograph, in the lives of every single person pictured here, he is ever present.

*****

THE STORY OF this most modern of blended families starts back in 1992. December 19 to be exact – barely a week before Christmas. Nathan Westwood, a bright 20-year-old student had just completed his first year of medicine at Brisbane's University of Queensland. Together with two mates, he had hatched a plan to drive to St George, in the west of the state, to go grape-picking and earn a bit of extra holiday pocket money.

His mother, Dianne, waved him off early on the morning of December 16, urging the three of them to look after each other and drive safely.

Later that morning and somewhere outside Goondiwindi, the trio found themselves following in the path of a lumbering petrol tanker. The driver of the truck would later tell an inquest the boys sat patiently behind him for some 15 minutes before the driver of their vehicle made the fateful decision to overtake. It was safe to pass – the day was clear, there was no oncoming traffic – but when a wheel caught the edge of the deep-rutted country road, the driver lost control of the car. Sitting in the passenger seat, Nathan bore the brunt of the subsequent crash. While his two friends walked away unscathed, Nathan was airlifted to Brisbane, where doctors worked frantically to rescue him from severe head injuries.

Over the next 48 hours, some 200 friends and family of the aspiring sports doctor rallied – keeping a vigil at the hospital, supporting Nathan's devastated family, praying for a miracle.

Yet the gods had other plans and on December 19, Dianne made the heartwrenching decision to turn off her son's life support. Long before his death, Nathan had nominated to be an organ donor. And so, as Dianne said her final, tearful goodbyes, and while railing at the senselessness of her loss and convinced this was a pain from which she would never emerge, she bequeathed her son's vital organs to medicine so that others might live.

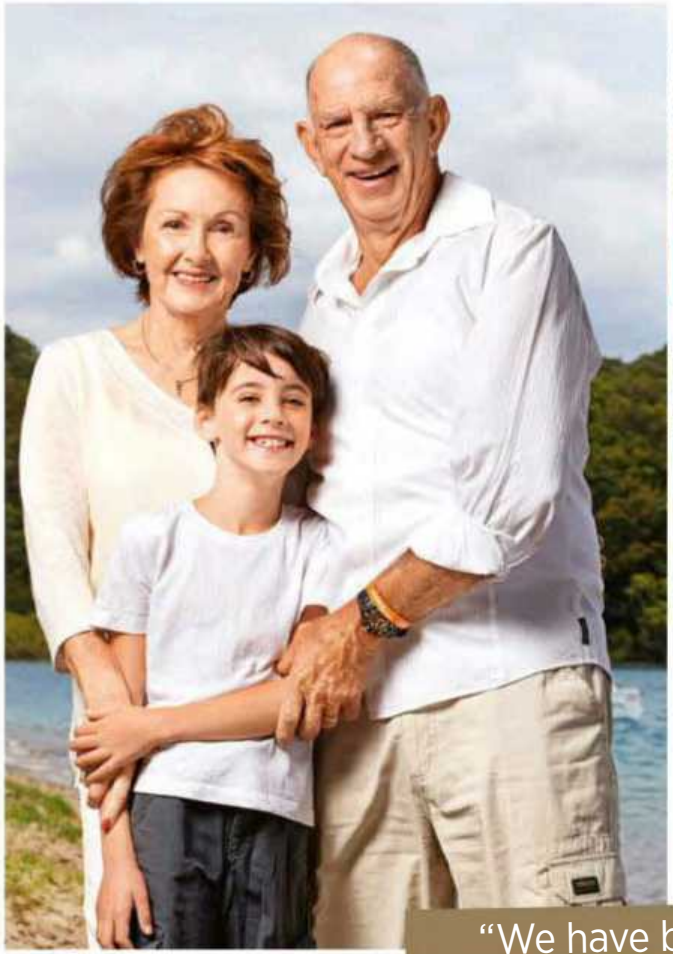
"I remember that night like it was yesterday," Dianne says now. "We spent time alone with Nathan in the ward, then walked alongside him as they wheeled him into the operating theatre and said goodbye."

Across town, in another suburb of Brisbane, Terry Donovan was facing down a bleak Christmas of his own. Recently diagnosed with cardiomyopathy – an inflammation and enlarging of the heart – the then 51-year-old father of four had been told by doctors that unless he found a heart donor, he had no more than six months to live.

The news had devastated his small family: wife of 27 years Nook, daughters Karryn, Cathy, Toni and son Gregg.

Terry was too young to die. His kids had only just grown up: they were yet to marry, yet to produce families of their own. Terry had always been a pillar of strength in the Donovan clan – a former-rugby-playing, ➤

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Left: Dianne and Terry with Terry's grandson, Nathan, named after Dianne's son. Above: Terry carrying the Olympic torch in 2000.

surf life-saving bear of a man. The possibility that he wouldn't live to meet a single one of his grandchildren was unthinkable.

So when the call came on the afternoon of December 19 that a heart had just become available, he was at the hospital and prepping for surgery within hours.

*****

NOW USUALLY, IN organ donation stories, this would be where the tale ended. Strict privacy laws exist across Australia to keep donor families and organ recipients separated.

However, this being Queensland, where everyone knows everyone and it's considered rude not to strike up a conversation with a stranger, the families eventually found one another.

It started when Dianne and Terry began communicating anonymously through their respective organ donation 'co-ordinators'. On the first anniversary of Nathan's death and after "a year of grief that I honestly didn't think I would survive", Dianne sent a yellow rose and a letter to Terry via their respective proxies.

"We have been welcomed into the family from the day we met them."

"We had had yellow roses at Nathan's funeral," explains Dianne. "Yellow is a symbol of grace and faith and love."

On the second anniversary, she sent two roses. On the third, Terry beat her to the punch and sent a rose bush.

And so, for eight years, they kept up regular communication through a third party – relaying all the news from their respective lives, signing their letters from "Terry" and "Dianne" – but never knowing exactly who the other was. Both would sit silently every year in a Brisbane church at the annual thanksgiving service for organ donor families and recipients, wondering if the other might be present.

Then, in the year 2000, Terry applied to run the Olympic torch as it made its way around the country in the lead-up to the Sydney Games.

"I'm running for my heart donor and my donor family," he wrote in his application. Weeks before he took to the torch course, Terry put together the clues contained in eight years' worth of correspondence, tracked Dianne down and tentatively made the phone call that would change both their lives.

"I had no words," Dianne remembers of the call. "I was gobsmacked. It was a rush of mixed emotion."

They met a week later – another day filled with trepidation and tears. When Terry ran his leg of the Olympic torch course a few days later, he did so with a photo of Nathan under his shirt, nestled against his fast-beating heart.

Fifteen years on and they are the best of friends. No, more than that: they are family.

Dianne, her husband Tom, her mother Mary and daughter Melissa are all regular attendees at Donovan family gatherings. Dianne and Tom have been to three Donovan family weddings and they always celebrate Christmas together. Eight years ago, when Terry's son Gregg and his wife Anthea produced a grandson for Terry and Nook, they called him Nathan.

"At the time Terry received Nathan's heart, he had no grandchildren. Now he has eight and one of them is named after my son," says Dianne, wistfully. "We have been welcomed into the family from the day we met them."

For Terry, now 74, the gratitude he feels is such that "no words can describe".

"I remember meeting Dianne at my door that day and just crying," he says. "I had prepared what I wanted to say and practiced it over and over. But emotion got the better of me and, in the end, all I could say was 'Thank you'. I mean, what more can you say? ➤

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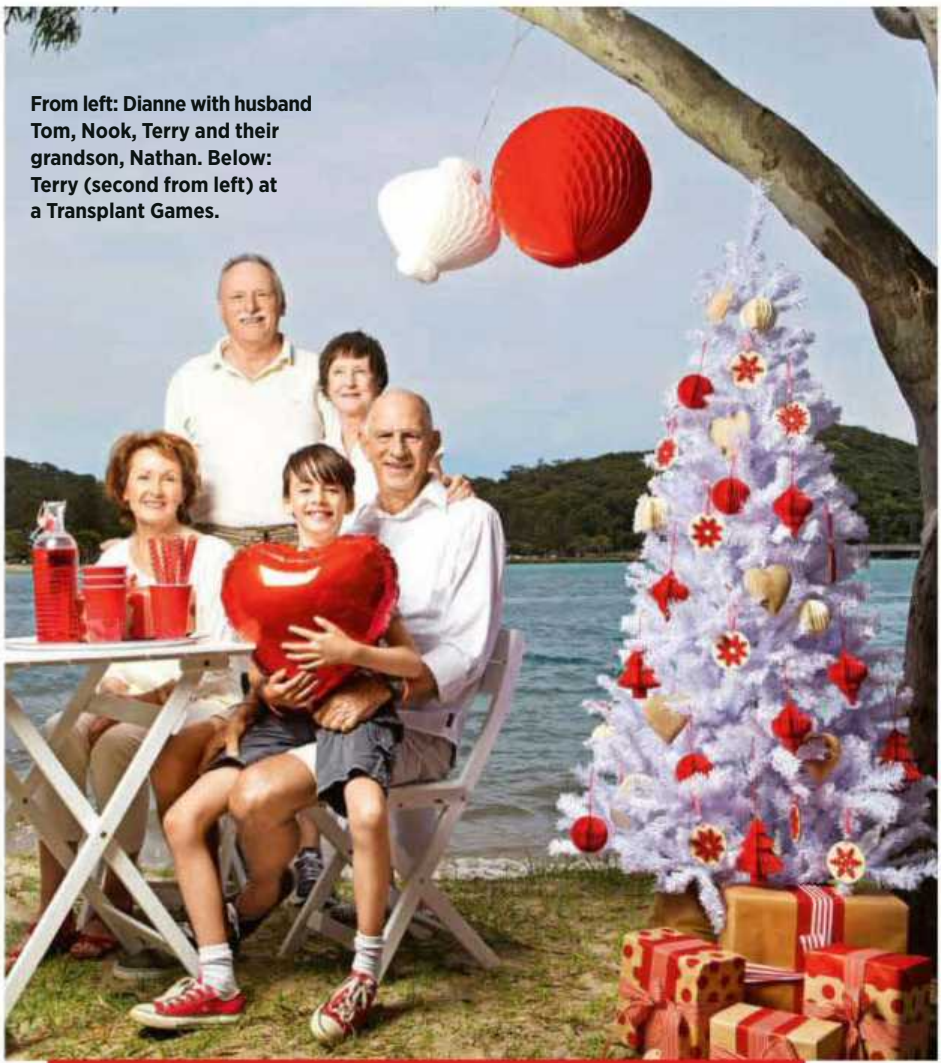
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From left: Dianne with husband Tom, Nook, Terry and their grandson, Nathan. Below: Terry (second from left) at a Transplant Games.

"Terry is so mindful of the gift ... He is a wonderful caretaker of my son's heart."

"When I get up in the morning, the first thing I do is walk past the framed photo of Nathan I have in the hallway and think, 'Gee, I am lucky'.

"I have seen all four of my kids get married and eight grandchildren be born, and none of it would have been possible were it not for the generosity of this family."

Yet what is it like for Dianne to sit with Terry and hold his hand, and know that the life of this man – this relative stranger – is being sustained by her son's heart?

"A year or so after having met and spent time with Terry, I asked if I could put my head to his chest and listen to Nathan's heart beating," Dianne recalls. "It's hard to describe how that feels. It was difficult but empowering. It was beating away so beautifully."

And beat it has continued to do – pumping blood and oxygen into body parts which even at 74 are unusually active.

Terry still competes at the World Transplant Games, where in the past 15 years he has won medals in countries as far-flung as South Africa, Sweden and France, in events as diverse as badminton, tennis and the 20-kilometre bike ride.

"Next year might have to be my last year at the Games," he says, somewhat ruefully. "I've run out of people in my age group."

For Dianne, the experience of watching Terry wring so much out of life in the 22 years since Nathan died has been simultaneously uplifting and bittersweet.

"If you had lined up a group of possible recipients and knew a little about each of them, I would absolutely have chosen Terry to take Nathan's heart," she says.

"He is so mindful of the gift he has been given. He is a wonderful caretaker of my son's heart."

She pauses, overcome with emotion. Her voice catches.

"You don't ever get over it, you know? Never, ever. I know it is 23 years this Christmas and to a lot of people that might sound like a long time, but losing a child is something else again. You never get over it.

"My Nathan was named because it means 'a gift from God'. Because that's what he was to me. And that's what he was to Terry." ■



GIVE LIFE THIS CHRISTMAS

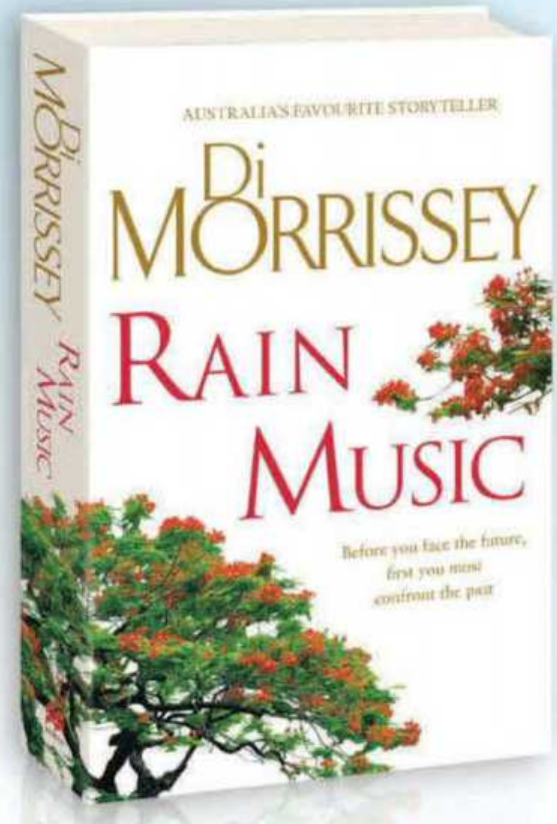
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Love WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT

The story of 70-somethings Georgina and Terry just goes to show that love can blossom anytime, anywhere. **Sue Smethurst** reports on an extraordinary romance.

IF YOU LOOK up the definition of age, the dictionary says "the length of time of something's existence". There's no mention of a number, the state of our bones, the strength of our hearts or the spirit of our minds.

Age is no measure of a life well lived, of wisdom, love, sadness or happiness. It simply has no meaning, as Georgina Sheppard and Terry Duffy have proved. This summer, as he prepares to turn 80, Terry will marry the love of his life, 70-year-old Georgina.

"I'm a cradle snatcher," this loveable larrikin says, firmly tongue-in-cheek.

As modern day love stories go, this is far from conventional. They didn't meet on Facebook or Tinder – they fell in love at an aged care home in rural Victoria. Feeling lonely and tired of caring for himself, Terry checked himself into Mercy Place in Shepparton in December 2013.

"My memory was up the creek, I could tell you precise details about things that happened 50 years ago, but I couldn't tell you what I had for breakfast," he says.

Georgina arrived 12 months later and they both agree the last thing they were looking for was love. "I wanted a man like I wanted a hole in the head!" she says, laughing. "I never imagined when I came here that I'd find romance, but Terry was very caring, he fussed over me and it was nice. We grew closer and closer together, and one day I realised that the birds were singing and the bells were ringing, and from them on we haven't been apart."

Terry adds, "When I moved in here, I got rid of all of my clothes and I only kept one good suit because I thought I'd need it to wear to funerals. Lucky I kept it because I need it for my wedding."

Clearly, from day one, these two fitted each other like a well-worn shoe. It wasn't love at first sight, but Georgina recalls meeting Terry, who is quite a character, on the first day she moved into Mercy Place, when he was zipping around on a scooter.

"He came buzzing through the lounge room and I said to him, 'What the hell are you doing?' Well, with that, he circled around and did a 'doughnut' and stopped right in front of me to say hello. I thought 'Who's this show-off?' "

Terry was taken with this feisty new resident, so when the chance came to sit next to her on a bus trip to Echuca just weeks later, he jumped at it.

"I had my eye on her," Terry says, winking. "I've used a few tricks in my ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALANA LANDSBERRY. STYLING BY BIANCA LANE. HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY KIM TAVARES. GEORGINA WEARS SUSSAN TOP AND CARDIGAN. TERRY WEARS SPORTSCRAFT SHIRT.



Happy days ... Georgina says the key to a great relationship is to have fun and laugh a lot.

time that impressed the ladies, so when I found out we were sitting beside one another on the bus I thought I'd make an impression on her. I said to her, 'Would it be promiscuous of me to sit beside you on the bus to Echuca?' I didn't really know what it meant, it just sounded fancy, but by the look on her face, I'd said the wrong thing! I know what it means now."

Georgina laughs at the recollection. "I thought, 'You silly old bugger!' We didn't know one another very well at the start of the trip, but by the end, we did. We had a lot in common and we laughed a lot. We had a good fun day."

They chatted and laughed all the way, and somewhere along the Goulburn Valley Highway between Shepparton and Echuca, Cupid struck. Terry and Georgina are in a low-care wing, so Terry can whisk her out to a local shopping centre for coffee dates or to watch movies.

"At first, we were just friends, but enjoying one another's company," Georgina says, "but when I realised something was happening to our hearts, then we were very secretive about it. Well, we tried to be. Whatever the reason, we found a way to get away for a bit of time on our own."

Staff at Mercy Place, though, were well aware love was blossoming.

"I got down on bended knee to ask for her hand in marriage, but I couldn't get back up!" Terry jokes. "No, seriously, this is the best thing that's ever happened to me, I've got someone to live for now. We'll have a good 20 years together, no doubt about it."



Tough lives have hardened these two, which makes this romance all the more sweet. Terry, who worked as a labourer, had two failed marriages, faced a long battle with alcohol (which he proudly points out he has long overcome) and was unable to have a family of his own.

"Today, I feel like a new man because I have someone to live for."

Georgina was married for 45 years and has two children and six grandchildren, but life hasn't been easy. She won a battle with ovarian cancer and cancer of the eye, then cared for her husband until he died.

They agree that this relationship has brought them a happiness they never imagined at this stage of life, with a love quite unlike what they had before.

"I'm different with Georgina, I never thought I'd find a friend like her, let alone a wife," Terry says. "Today, I feel like a new man because I have someone to live for."

"We're older and wiser now," Georgina says, "but I also think my relationship with Terry is now about me, it's not about caring for others, doing for others and the struggles we sometimes face in life. My children are grown-up, I don't have to care for anyone anymore. I can enjoy this friendship and have a bit of fun for myself."

When you meet them for the first time, you'd easily assume they've been together forever. They finish one another's sentences, dish up a decent ribbing and laugh a lot. There's no pretension – they are both very comfortable in their own skin.

"It's a beautiful feeling having a companion," Terry says. "We are totally honest with one another. I'm a fussy old fella and she's fussy, too, but we respect one another and we're just melding together – what you get is what you see."

Georgina adds, "We acknowledge our first spouses, we're not forgetting them – you never forget the people you love – but we're living a different life now."

With a sapphire and gold engagement band on Georgina's finger and a wedding to be planned, they've moved into Terry's room and use Georgina's room as a lounge room and sewing room. Georgina is contemplating making her wedding dress – if she can find the time.

Terry often helps out the "old ones" at Mercy Place by doing their shopping or running errands, while Georgina, who at 62 went back to college to become a dementia carer, tries to visit the high needs unit at Mercy Place to visit dementia patients each day.

Georgina's advice for a happy relationship is simple. "Take your vows seriously," she says. "There's no point saying 'till death do us part' if it's not in your heart. Words are cheap. You've got to remember you've made a commitment to that person. Have fun, laugh a lot." ■

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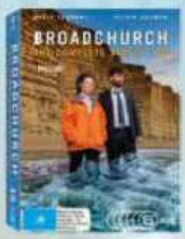
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Queen of the fairies

When the call came, **Amanda Blair** answered in all her polyester glory.



> I learned that fairies, like beggars, can't be choosers.

ONCE UPON A time, there was a little girl who wanted to be a Fairy. She had all the right attributes – charm, grace and excellent dental hygiene. Every night, she would go to bed convinced the Fairy Queen would visit, sprinkle magical dust and, voilà, her life and wardrobe would be transformed.

Yet sadly, as is oft the case in these ye olde tales, tomorrow never came for the little girl and she felt that her wings had been clipped before she'd ever had a chance to fly … One day, when she was all grown up, slightly chubby and with now questionable dental hygiene, she was working in a radio station and received a phone call that would change her life. "Amanda, it's the Christmas Pageant here. We want you to be the Queen of the Fairies – you interested?"

WAS I INTERESTED? Sign me up and fit me for that costume *immediately*. Pass me those wings *right now*.

Christmas is a time for giving, but it's also a time for receiving the gifts of inflatable nativity scenes, shopping centre Santas and community-based Yuletide pageants. While parents all over the land search furiously for costumes for their little Joseph and Mary, and wonder how they even make one for a cow who is "lowing", here in Adelaide we proudly boast the biggest and the best pageant of them all. Not wanting to make this a size issue, but our pageant *is* the largest Christmas event in the *entire* Southern Hemisphere, with 60 floats delighting the 465,000 people who watch it. Yep, they don't call us RADelaide for nothin'.



On pageant day, I arrived at HQ to get fitted into my costume. It was pale yellow with white wings and I felt just like a lemon meringue fairy. Not exactly what I had in mind, but after a discussion with the costume department, I learned that fairies, like beggars, can't be choosers. For some reason, which I still analyse years later, I'd set off from home that morning forgetting one vital piece of equipment – my underpants. In what was possibly a Christmas pageant first, I was a "commando" fairy. The full ramification of this early morning oversight wasn't revealed until I was lifted onto my float and placed in position. You see, the marker where I was to stand for the next two hours was a giant lily pad. A mirrored lily pad.

My floaty fairy dress was immediately shoved between my legs, transforming what had been a delicious puff of fairy skirt into an ungainly pair of lemon culottes. It took something away from my vision splendored.

We set off and the crowds went "ohh" and "ahhh", and I dished out the festive platitudes and did my very best royal wave – taking a cue from the Queen. I also figured a gentle wave was less likely to attract attention to my bingo wings. I'm guessing Tinkerbell had similar concerns. As the parade wove through the streets of Adelaide dispensing love, light and cheer, I decided I had found my calling and future job – Ambassador for Kindness. I wondered if the Fairy Queen was watching down, cursing the decision she made to overlook me all those years ago.

As the parade wore on and on, interrupted at one point for 15 minutes by the collapse of Santa due to dehydration, the 37°C heat started to get the better of me. My make-up melted and ran down my face, making me look like Alice Cooper, and my 100 per cent unnatural fibre frock started sticking to all my bits. At this point, I started to reconsider this fairy gig.

I grew tired of the joy to the world and the need to smile and be nice to people even when I overheard some of them mutter, "Oh, she's not a very delicate fairy", "I didn't think fairies had thick ankles", and from one little boy of around eight, "Mum, are fairies supposed to be that fat?"

Hmm … biting your tongue, unnatural festive cheer and being nice to everybody, even if you want to tell them where to go, reminds me of something. Now, what is it? Oh, that's right, Christmas Day is just around the corner … ■

ABOUT THE WRITER

Amanda Blair lives in Adelaide with her four children and a husband she quite likes when she sees him. In her spare time, she talks a lot and sometimes does it on the radio and the telly.

GETTY IMAGES.

Family beach *Christmas*

Rebecca Rac chooses the perfect outfits for the whole family to celebrate in style and comfort.

STYLING BY **REBECCA RAC** PROPS STYLING BY **HANDE RENSHAW** FOOD STYLING BY **VALERIE RAC**





From left: **Sarah wears Country Road cotton dress, 4-16, $179,** countryroad.com.au. **Piper wears Country Road cotton dress, 2-12, $59.95,** as before. **Ethan wears Cotton On Kids polyester shirt, 1-8, $22.95,** cottonon.com, **Tom & Teddy cotton shorts, 1-12, $54.95,** tomandteddy.com, **and Zara cotton hat, 3-14, $29.95,** (02) 9376 7600. **Olivia wears Seed viscose top, 6-14, $69.95, and linen and cotton shorts, 6-14, $89.95,** seedheritage.com. **Canvas bag from Country Road,** as before. **Deckchairs from Ici Et Là**, icietla.com.au. **Shell wreath from My Island Home,** www.myislandhome.com.au. **Wreath and mini tree from Christmas Warehouse,** christmaswarehouse.com.au. **Beach blanket from Bloom & Co,** bloomandco.com.au. **Food from Aldi**, aldi.com.au.

HAIR BY KEIREN STREET. MAKE-UP BY ANNABEL BARTON USING SEPHORA IT COSMETICS AND ANNETTE MCKENZIE. THESE IMAGES HAVE BEEN RETOUCHED.



From left: **Laura wears C/Meo Collective polyester dress, XXS-XL, $189.95,** cmeocollective.com. **Piper wears Boden polyester and cotton dress, 1.5y-12y, $74,** bodenclothing.com.au. **Ethan wears Boden cotton shirt, 1.5y-12y, $38,** as before. **Sarah wears David Lawrence cotton dress, 6-14, $249,** davidlawrence.com.au. **Grant wears Zara linen shirt, S-XL, $69.95, and leather belt, XS-XL, $49.95,** (02) 9376 7600, **Sportscraft cotton pants, 28-42, $129.99,** sportscraft.com.au, **and Marcs suede shoes, 41-46, $169.95,** marcs.com.au. **Chad wears Witchery cotton shirt, XS-XXL, $99.95,** witchery.com.au, **and Target cotton shorts, 30-40, $35,** target.com.au. **Olivia wears Country Road polyester and lace dress, XXS-XL, $299,** countryroad.com.au. **Christmas centrepiece from Papier D'Amour,** papierdamour.com.au. **Tray from Williams-Sonoma,** williams-sonoma.com.au.





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Laura wears Zara viscose jumpsuit, XS-L, $139, (02) 9376 7600.
Olivia wears Seed cotton dress, 6-14, $169.95, seedheritage.com.

From left: **Laura wears Country Road cotton and nylon top, XXS-XL, $149,** countryroad.com.au, **and Zara cotton and nylon shorts, XS-L, $69.95,** witchery.com.au. **Ethan wears Target paper weave hat, XS-M, $15, and cotton shorts, 1-7, $10,** target.com.au, **and H&M linen and cotton shirt, 2y-10y, $19.95,** 1800 828 002. **Chad wears Boohoo polyester and cotton shirt, S-XL, $20,** boohoo.com, **Ted Baker cotton shorts, 28R-42S, $169,** tedbaker.com/au, **and Ray-Ban acetate sunglasses, $209.95,** opsm.com.au. **Grant wears Sportscraft cotton shirt, XS-XL, $69.99,** sportscraft.com.au, **Zara cotton shorts, 38-48, $69.95,** (02) 9376 7600, **and Trenery straw hat, $59.95,** www.trenery.com.au. **Deckchairs from Ici Et Là**, icietla.com.au. **Croquet set from Vintage Patina,** vintagepatina.com.au. **Blanket from Paddo To Palmy**, paddotopalmy.com.au.



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Laura **wears Zara polyamide and elastane top, S-XL, $14.95,** (02) 9376 7600, **Keepsake polyester skirt, XXS-XL, $209.95,** keepsakethelabel.com.au, **and Wittner leather shoes, 35-42, $169.95,** wittner.com.au. Piper **wears Seed cotton dress, 1y-10y, $59.95,** seedheritage.com.au, **and Target synthetic shoes, 6-12, $25,** target.com.au. **Christmas tree and decorations from Myer,** myer.com.au. **Christmas decorations, "Felix" embossed Santa sack and star topper from Papier D'Amour,** papierdamour.com.au.

All prices are approximate. Items available online where websites are quoted.







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Curvy style

Fashion finds for shapely figures

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Katies' new summer wardrobe is a real inspiration: practical staples in easy shapes, vibrant colours and energetic prints. This collection is full of pieces you will be wearing all summer long. **Katies cotton chambray dress, 8-20, $69.95, and polyurethane vinyl bag, $49.95,** katies.com.au. ▶





Retro swimwear

Sirens Swimwear offers a range of ultra-feminine swimsuits in 1950s-inspired retro prints. The figure-flattering styles feature ruched tummy panels and underwire cups. **Sirens Swimwear micro-nylon and elastane one-pieces, 8-20, $199 each,** sirensswimwear.com.au.



SUMMER SNEAKERS

Lightweight sneakers are a sensible alternative to sandals, especially at the beach. These Ziera pumps come with a wide fit. Look for breathable fabrics in playful patterns or chic metallic. **Ziera canvas and rubber sneakers (yellow and red), 35-44, $129.95, and leather sneakers (silver), 35-44, $159.95,** zierashoes.com.



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1 Embody Denim maxi dress, 12-22, $329.95, embodydenim.com.au. **2 Hope & Harvest polyelastane maxi dress, 12-26, $159,** hopeandharvest.com.

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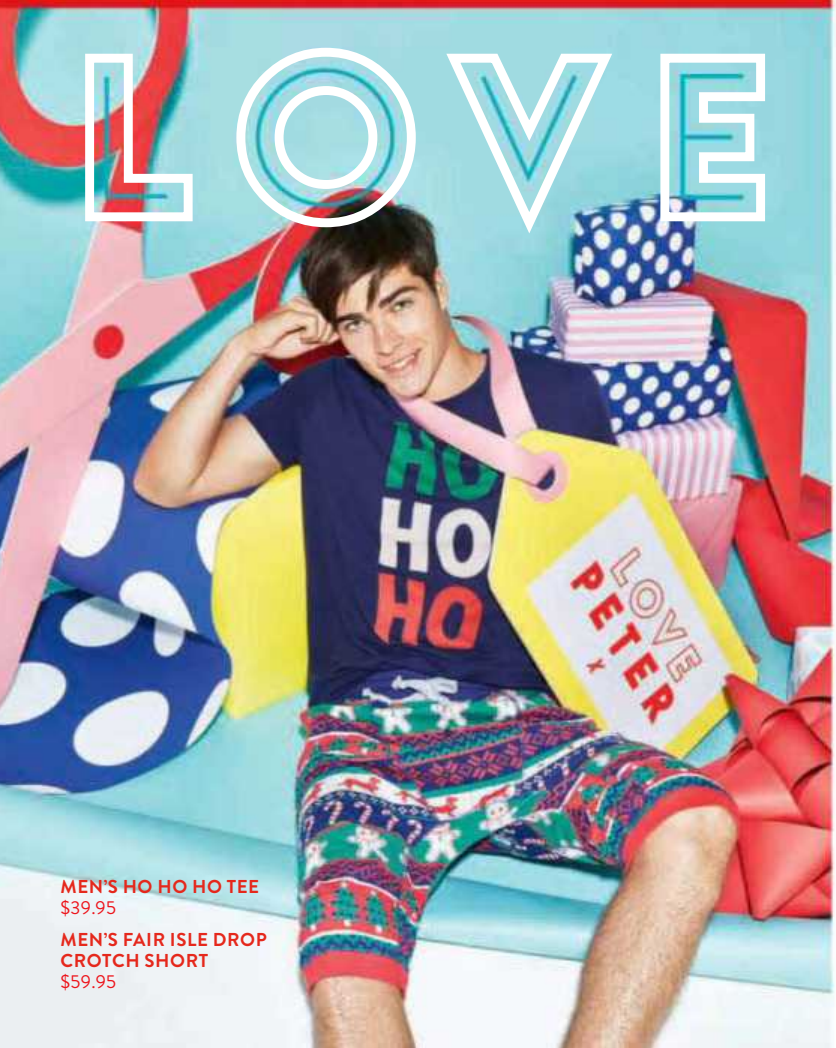
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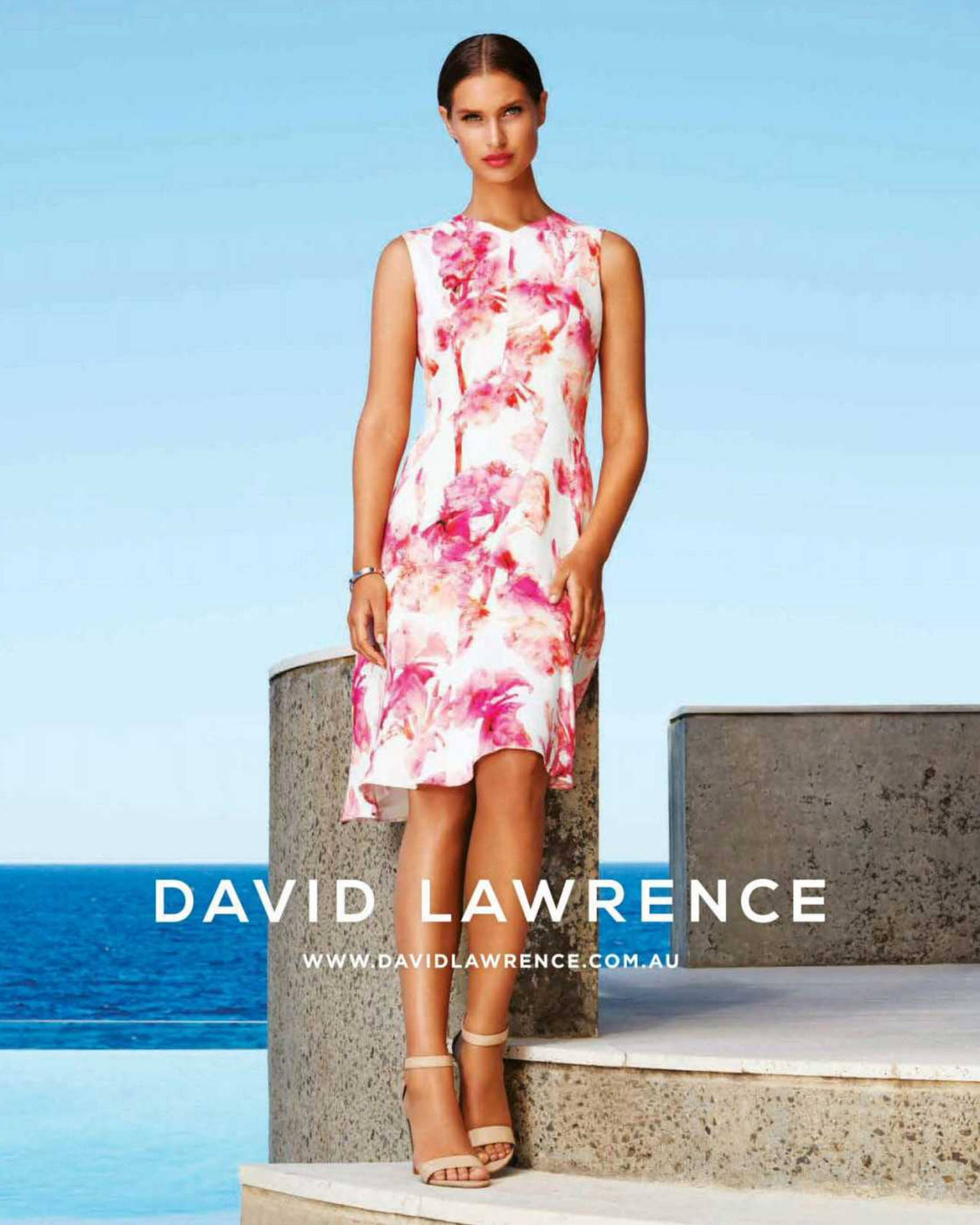


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Party jewellery

Statement jewellery is a great way to glam up your outfit. Here are the best picks for the party season.



MIXED METALS

FORGET THE OLD RULES ABOUT MIXING GOLD AND SILVER – TWO-TONE IS A MODERN WAY TO WEAR YOUR METAL.

1 **Dinosaur Designs brass bangle, $255, and brass ring, $150,** dinosaurdesigns.com.au. 2 **Natalie Alamein sterling silver and 14ct gold bead bracelets, $50 each,** natalielamein.com. 3 **Amber Sceats stainless steel and 18ct gold-plated earrings, $129,** ambersceats.com. 4 **Pushmataaha gold-plated and sterling silver earrings, $253,** pushmataaha.com. 5 **Samantha Wills rhodium-plated sterling silver rings, $129 for set,** samanthawills.com. 6 **Sarina Suriano rhodium-plated and stone ring, $139.95, from The Dark Horse Jewellery,** thedarkhorse.com.au. 7 **Amber Rose By Rockmans alloy metal earrings, $9.99,** rockmans.com.au/accessories. 8 **Amber Sceats rose gold bangle, $119,** as before. 9 **Amber Rose By Rockmans alloy metal ring, $8.99,** as before. 10 **Najo sterling silver ring, $119,** najo.com.au. 11 **Recreational Studio 18ct rose gold-plated sterling silver necklace, $149,** recreationalstudio.com. 12 **Dinosaur Designs brass pendant, $195,** as before. 13 **Liberté sterling silver bangle, $69.95,** liberte.com.au. 14 **Samantha Wills 9ct rose gold-plated sterling silver cuff, $159,** as before.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASMINE POOLE. STYLING BY BIANCA LANE. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE. ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE WHERE WEBSITES ARE QUOTED.



TRIBAL COLOUR

LAYER NECKLACES, STACK BRACELETS AND EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT COLOURS AND TEXTURES.

1 **Punjaban Diva metal, 24ct gold-plated and stone earrings, $175,** punjabandiva.com. 2 **Punjaban Diva metal and stone ring, $28,** as before. 3 **Odisya beaded bangles, $30 each,** odisya.com. 4 **Megan Park brass, silk organza, sequin, bead and brass bangle, $159,** meganpark.com.au. 5 **Adorne tassel and mirror necklace, $49.95,** adorne.com.au. 6 **Natalie Alamein cotton tassel earrings, $55,** natalliealamein.com. 7 **Lucy Folk woven friendship bracelet, $175,** lucyfolk.com. 8 **Peter Lang silver-plated cotton thread earrings, $99,** peterlang.com.au. 9 **Peter Lang brass-plated, beads and feather necklace, $250,** as before. 10 **My Island Home pompom cuff, $25,** www.myislandhome.com.au. 11 **My Island Home pompom, shell, bead and charm necklace, $145,** as before.



the 2015 SPEC *edit*

"I love animal prints because they never go out of style. Animal prints can complement just about any outfit, which is why you can't go wrong with glasses like these from Specsavers."
Alex Perry, Fashion Designer



1.



2.



3.

2 PAIRS SINGLE VISION FROM $199

STATEMENT PRINTS



4.

Love a neutral approach when it comes to your wardrobe? This season make wild animal print pieces your go-to accessory.

Summer's finally on its way, heralding a change of season and a new and refreshing set of style rules. Crisp, white linen, floaty yet sophisticated dresses in neutral tones and denim-on-denim are all big news this year. If your go-to style is understated luxury, and your closet comprises a clever curation of shirts, pants, shorts and blazers in muted colours, then adding a point of interest to each look via animal print accessories should be your S/S 15 statement.

Whether you prefer warm gold tones, or cool accessories in silver and white, try the Alex Perry range of elegant frames at Specsavers. With two pairs of designer glasses from $199, complete with single vision lenses, you'll always be in style at Specsavers.

1. 2 pairs single vision $299, 2 pairs multifocal $449.
2. 2 pairs single vision $199, 2 pairs multifocal $349.
3. 2 pairs single vision $199, 2 pairs multifocal $349.
4. 2 pairs single vision $199, 2 pairs multifocal $349.

Specsavers

#SpecsaversStyle

Prices complete with standard lenses with scratch resistant coating. Second pair must be from same price range of frames and lens range or below. Must be same prescription. Extra options not included. Prices correct at time of print. Frames available while stocks last.



NATURAL TONES

KEEP THE PALETTE NEUTRAL AND LOOK FOR ACCENTS OF GOLD, WOOD OR SHELL.

1 Country Road metal shell bracelet, $29.95, countryroad.com.au. **2 Natalie Alamein tassel earrings, $80,** natalieealamein.com. **3 My Island Home brass and cowrie shell ring, $50,** www.myislandhome.com.au. **4 Pushmataaha sterling silver and bone ring, $245,** pushmataaha.com. **5 Wanderlust & Co 18ct gold-plated cuff, $49,** wanderlustandco.com. **6 H&M shell and wood necklace, $19.95,** hm.com/au. **7 By Charlotte gold-plated earrings, $109,** bycharlotte.com.au. **8 Funkis metal and wood necklace, $35,** funkis.com. **9 Elk wood and resin bangle, $38,** elkaccessories.com. **10 Elk wood and resin ring, $30,** as before. **11 Dinosaur Designs resin and sterling silver earrings, $105,** dinosaurdesigns.com.au. **12 Sportscraft Annabel necklace, $69.99,** sportscraft.com.au.

nautical **essentials**

Ride the wave of the nautical trend this summer with the great range at Target.

Summer means pool parties and lazy days at the beach. Nautical-inspired fashion is the perfect choice for the water-loving summer life – just team navy, white and a stripe.

Target has the on-trend fashion you need, from tees and shorts to swimsuits, dresses and sunhats. So stay on trend with Target, where quality styles are always at affordable prices.





> Look like you've just stepped off a yacht with nautical-inspired summer fashion essentials.

Sail AWAY

With its combination of navy, white and stripes, **the nautical trend is made for relaxed summer living**. Try this navy stripe tee with matching shorts in sky blue, espadrilles and a white sunhat.

Stripe SENSE

The **stripe is an essential element of the nautical look**, whether it's on a neat tee with crisp white shorts or a relaxed tee dress teamed with strappy sandals, ready to take you to lunch or shopping.



1. Tee, $10. **2.** Straw sunhat, $10. **3.** One-piece swimsuit, $59. **4.** Shorts, $35. **5.** Espadrilles, $29. Main image: Model wears stripe tee, $20, shorts, $29, and sandals, $20. Inset: Model wears stripe tee dress, $29. Styles and colours will vary from store to store and online. No rainchecks.

SPEND AND SAVE

Come in and try Target's latest fashion and get **$10 off** when you spend $60 or more on full priced women's, men's and kids' clothing, sleepwear, underwear, hosiery, socks, footwear, accessories and homewares. **ONLINE CODE: FASHIONYAY**

Excludes electrical. Cannot be used on Target eBay purchases. Offer valid from 19/11/15-20/12/15 (midnight AEST). Voucher is redeemable on full price merchandise only at Target, Target Country and Urban by Target stores with presentation of coupon at the register or online by using the promo code FASHIONYAY. Cannot be used on rainchecks or lay-by purchases and Coles Group Card payments. Limit of one voucher per transaction. This voucher is not redeemable for cash or in conjunction with any other offer.

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*Christmas 2015 gifts only. Excludes all other gifts. Proceeds that exceed our donation goal will provide safe water elsewhere. Learn more at www.thebodyshop.com/give-water

My Beauty Wishlist

For Xmas



1 **Mercedes Benz Rose For Women 90**ml edt **$79.00**
2 **W7 Nails $2.99** 3 **W7 Chunky Lips $4.99** 4 **W7 Super Duo Eyeliner $4.99** 5 **W7 Lipsticks Kiss Matte $4.99**
6 **Goat Soap With Argan Oil** 100g **$2.99** 7 **W7 Souffle Mascara Blackest Black $4.99** 8 **Café Skin Scrub** 200ml **$13.99**
9 **Grace Cole Boutique English Rose and Champagne Hand Wash** 500ml **$5.99** 10 **Grace Cole Boutique English Rose and Champagne Body Lotion** 500ml **$5.99**

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beauty & HEALTH

40 BEAUTY GIFT IDEAS



The scent of a woman p126 ✻ Beauty news p133 ✻ The Christmas pretty list p135 ✻ Serious illness: what to say when you don't know what to say p141 ✻ Allergy relief p145 ✻ Ask the doctor p149.

GETTY IMAGES.



Our favourite fragrances

1. Guerlain Shalimar Cologne Eau de Toilette, 50ml, $112. **2.** Repetto Eau Florale Eau de Toilette, 50ml, $89. **3.** Lancôme La Vie Est Belle Intense Eau de Parfum, 50ml, $140. **4.** Chloé Eau de Toilette, 50ml, $100. **5.** Gucci Flora Eau de Parfum, 75ml, $133. **6.** Calvin Klein Eternity Now Eau de Parfum, 100ml, $89. **7.** Elizabeth Arden Always Red Eau de Toilette, 100ml, $69. **8.** Givenchy Live Irresistible Eau de Parfum, 75ml, $149. **9.** Prada Infusion d'Iris Eau de Parfum, 100ml, $150. **10.** Thierry Mugler Limited Edition Alien 10th Anniversary Talisman Eau de Parfum, 40ml, $105. **11.** Alaïa Paris Eau de Parfum, 50ml, $124. **12.** Bottega Veneta Knot Eau Florale Eau de Parfum, 75ml, $195. **13.** Marc Jacobs Decadence Eau de Parfum, 50ml, $150. **14.** Miu Miu Eau de Parfum, 50ml, $130.

The scent OF A woman

There's a fine art to making perfumes, but selecting a scent that encapsulates your personality should come naturally. **Sheree Mutton** travels to the global fragrance capital, Paris, to learn more about choosing your perfect perfume.

A PIONEER OF understated elegance and the queen of fragrance, Coco Chanel, once said, "A woman who doesn't wear perfume has no future." It's a little dramatic, but you can definitely appreciate the importance she placed on wearing a fragrance.

Perfume has long been a part of the French DNA and Coco's most famous scent, Chanel No.5, has remained one ➤



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Editor's pick

Valentino Donna Eau de Parfum, 100ml, $175. A classic and elegant floral fragrance with notes of rose essence b ended with bergamot, iris pallida and patchouli.



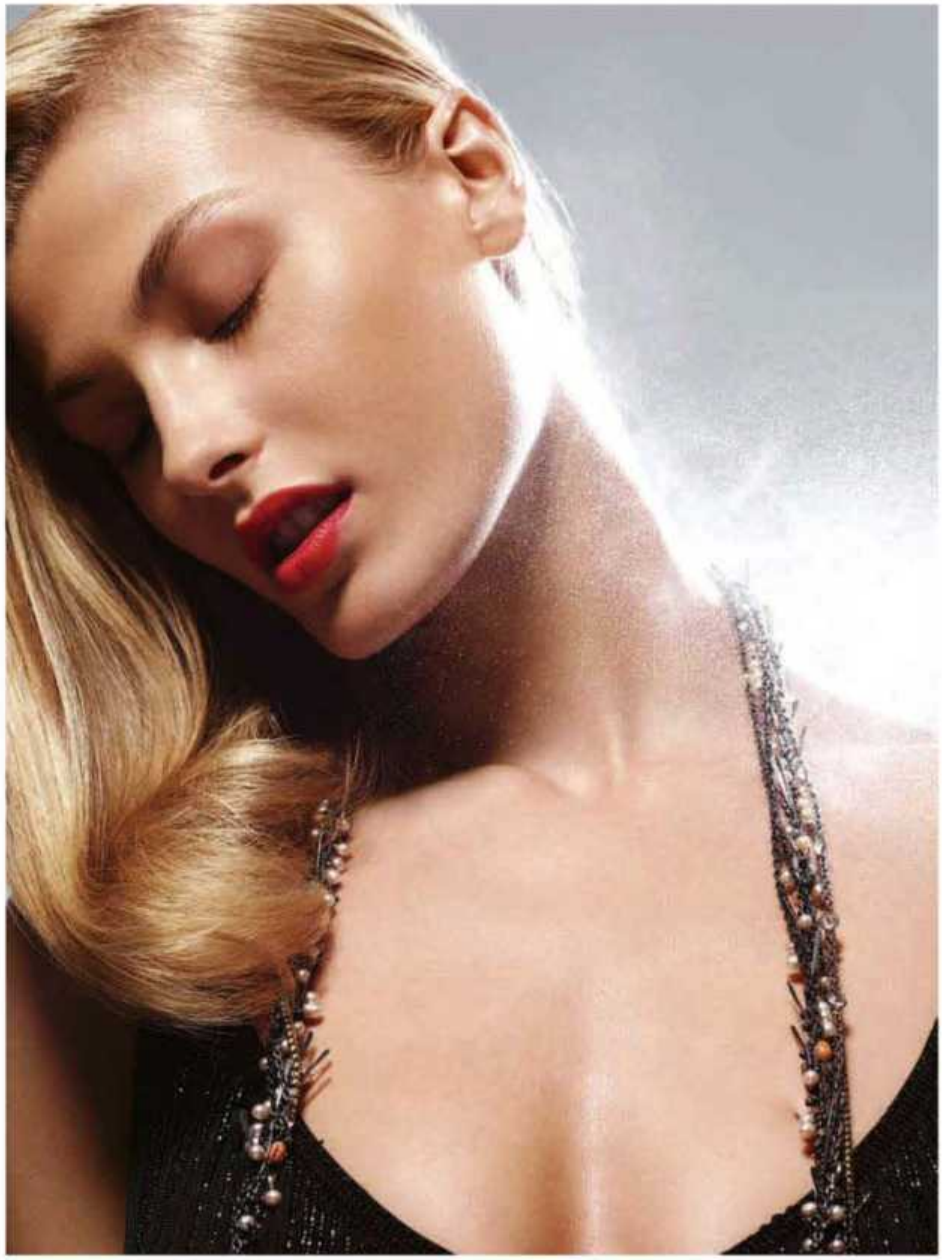
of the best-selling fragrances in the world for almost a century – so it's safe to say she knew what she was talking about. Like so many others, Coco acknowledged that perfume is not just about smelling great. A single spritz can awaken your senses, improve confidence and lift your mood. According to fragrance expert and author of *Fragrances Of The World*, Michael Edwards, recent psychological tests show that people who use fragrance regularly have a more positive attitude towards socialising. "It was generally found that people who believe that others think they smell good have more confidence," he says.

It's likely that your grandmother and even your mother have worn the same signature fragrance for decades. Yet younger women today are more inclined to have four or five scents on their dressing table, according to the season and occasion. Michael says, above all else, your fragrance should be one that reflects your character and individuality. "In your teens, you'll probably wear light, gentle scents," he says.

"In your late teens and early 20s, you'll often choose a fragrance because you identify with its image. As your sense of confidence develops, you tend to choose a fragrance that expresses your individual style, your personal taste."

Selecting the right scent

Standing at the counter of a department store, you'd be forgiven for feeling a little overwhelmed by the choice. Thierry Wasser, the nose and perfumer behind Guerlain, says the biggest factor for choosing a fragrance is still personal taste. "There are absolutely no rules, other than to feel happy with the fragrance that you wear," he says. Fragrance evaluator, Erica Moore, agrees. She says everyone has a different method for selecting a scent. "It's generally based on what they've liked and worn before, or based on what they like on other people," she explains. "The first approach is definitely the most reliable and ➤



"It was found that people who believe that others think they smell good have more confidence ... There are absolutely no rules, other than to feel happy with the fragrance that you wear."

TOP TIP FOR TESTING

Fragrance expert Michael Edwards, says the best way to try a perfume is to apply a few drops or a light spray to your wrist or the back of your hand. "Don't just sniff a flacon [bottle] because perfume comes to life only on your skin," he says. "Wait a few moments. Give the fragrance time to bloom on your skin, to let the notes 'talk' to you."

DON FLOOD/AUGUST/RAVEN & SNOW. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE.



Fragrance notes

The different stages we experience after spraying a fragrance are the "notes" of the scent. "Notes are just another way of describing the individual smells/scents in a fragrance," explains Erica Moore. "A note may be made up of a single molecule or raw material, or a combination of several – either way, it imparts the "smell of" something – for example, raspberry notes or sea breeze notes." The head or top notes are the first impression of a fragrance and appear first when you spray the perfume on your skin. As they diminish, the heart or middle notes bloom, followed by the base or soul notes, which are known as the foundation of the fragrance.

given what we know about scent preferences, our likes and dislikes around fragrance are completely unique and also quite subliminal," she says. "Subconsciously, our brains will give us a good or bad instantaneous response to a scent, based on the experience we've linked it to."

There are 14 sub-families within the major floral, oriental, woody and fresh scent families. "The largest and most consistently popular family is, not surprisingly, the floral family," reveals Erica. "If you are one of the lucky few who have varied fragrance tastes, you should definitely indulge it at every opportunity. You might have a fragrance wardrobe that matches your fashion wardrobe and certain fragrances are worn with certain outfits."

If you're unsure about your choice at the store, Erica suggests taking a few samples home to help you decide. "You should always take the fragrance [initially] on the blotter and leave overnight [a fragrance can take 24 hours to develop] – once you've shortlisted to one or two, try them on your skin and again leave overnight," she recommends.

As for the current perfume trends, Thierry Wasser says sweet-smelling scents continue to dominate the market. "For female fragrances, fruity and gourmand ones are still very popular," he says. "Even male fragrances seem to be influenced by this trend." ■



Paris is known as the fragrance capital of the world, producing some of the world's most popular scents.

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Veet Spawax has two refills with six **stripless wax discs. Use four for half legs, one for your bikini line and one for underarms. The only trouble is deciding what fragrance to pick! Choose from Purple Lily and Sugar Fig, or White Orchid and Vanilla.**

With its strip-free technique and resin based formula, the wax is easy to work around the curves of your body. This means that even tiny hairs as short as 2mm can still be removed.

Follow usage instructions.

WE'RE BRINGING THE SALON TO YOUR OWN HOME!
Get pampering this weekend, thanks to Veet Spawax. The Spawax Kit includes delicious Purple Lily and Sugar Fig fragranced wax discs that give you silky-smooth legs, underarms and bikini lines. No longer a tricky situation, the process is simple and enjoyable – and there won't be any waxy mess afterwards! With the pod's red glow giving off relaxed vibes, it's the ultimate beauty experience.

What beauty feels like: veet.com.au

HOW TO USE:

Quick, convenient and oh-so easy in just four steps.



STEP 1 Place the wax discs inside the pot and turn it on. Veet Spawax melts and heats the wax to its ideal temperature in 30 minutes, staying at that level.



STEP 2 Next up, scoop the wax on to the spatula and apply a layer of wax that's the thickness of an orange peel in the direction of your hair regrowth.



STEP 3 Leave for 30-60 seconds or until the wax becomes dry to touch. Holding your skin tight, pull the strip back against the direction of hair growth.



STEP 4 When you're all done, clean away any wax residue using some used wax or baby oil. Voila!



Veet Spawax Stripless Wax Warming Kit, $59.99; Veet Spawax Stripless Wax Refills in two fragrances: **Purple Lily and Sugar Fig or White Orchid and Vanilla, $14.99.**

Veet Spawax

Beauty news

Sheree Mutton tests some new mascaras, picks out her favourite oils and more.



5 minutes WITH JENNIFER HAWKINS

The model and TV star chats beauty with Sheree.

1 Nothing makes a woman more beautiful than ... Happiness. You can see if someone's positivity and energy is genuine. Of course, it's not normal to be happy at all times, but when it all comes together for someone, you can see it and it's a wonderful thing.

2 My number one beauty tip is ... Zzzs!

3 When I travel, I always take ... Workout gear, a good book, my sense of adventure, camera, laptop and a few feminine and sexy outfits for the night.

4 My daily skin routine involves ... **AM:** Cleanse, SPF50, minimal make-up. **PM:** Cleanse, moisturise, serums and Jbronze Face Flawless every second day.

5 The most common beauty mistake women make is ... The two I've personally made are – too much exfoliating. It can aggravate the skin rather than help it. And too much (TV) make-up. I tan my face, use Jbronze Daily Beauty Balm and use concealer for the occasionally yucky bits ... and illuminiser (my fave). So, I guess my motto is less is more.



Buy this

GIORGIO ARMANI ECSTASY LACQUER IN Nº402 RED-TO-GO, $52. A HIGH-GLOSS LIP STAIN WITH A BOLD, NON-STICKY, LASTING FINISH.



I'm loving ...

Burt's Bees Intense Hydration Nourishing Facial Water, 118ml, $24.95. Give your skin a drink with this facial water, formulated with clary sage and kiwifruit water. Just apply before your moisturiser.



LONGER LASHES

We all want a mascara to add volume and length to our lashes without smearing or smudging. These new products tick all the boxes, plus they will curl and define each and every lash. **1. Nars Audacious Mascara, $39. 2. Natio Heavenly Lashes Full Volume & Length Mascara, $15.95. 3. Rimmel London 24HR Supercurler Mascara, $17.95.**

THE GOOD OIL

There was a time when many of us thought facial oils could cause breakouts. We now know a quality facial oil can cleanse the skin and restore radiance. Here are some of my favourites: **1. Clarins Blue Orchid Face Treatment Oil, 30ml, $49. 2. Nu'trir Nourishing Cleansing Oil, 100ml, $24.95. 3. La Mer The Renewal Oil, 30ml, $320. 4. Palmer's Skin Therapy Oil – Face, 30ml, $19.99.**



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Available at Chemist Warehouse, My Chemist, Priceline, Terry White Chemist and other leading pharmacies.

THE *Christmas pretty* list

Sheree Mutton selects the best beauty products for the festive season.



▶ **AERIN Rose de Grasse EDP, 50ml, $290.** A soft and feminine perfume with a beautiful blend of three of the most precious rose ingredients – Rose Centifolia, Rose Otto Bulgarian and Rose Absolute.



▲ **Estée Lauder Pure Color Nail Lacquer in Envious, $38.** Simply glide on this bright and bold red nail polish to awaken your inner party girl.



◀ **My Burberry solid perfume, 4.5g, $70.** A floral and fresh scent conveniently housed in a compact, making it a portable perfume for women on the go.



▲ **Aromatherapy Associates Bath Jewels gift set, $60.** Enjoy the blissful aroma of the purest essential oils with this luxury trio.



▲ **Molton Brown Oudh Accord & Gold Single Wick Candle, $85.** An opulent candle featuring top notes of cinnamon, nutmeg and myrrh.



▲ **L'Oréal Paris Infallible Lip Gloss in Xtreme Resist Bulletproof, $21.95.** With antioxidants and vitamins, this lip gloss provides high-shine colour while hydrating the lips.



▶ **Jurlique Limited Edition Rose Body Oil, $88.** Indulge your skin with this rich and sweet-smelling body oil.



◀ **Clarins Aquatic Treasures Summer Bronzing Compact, $55.** This gorgeous bronzer will give your skin a subtle glow for summer.

STILL-LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS JANSEN. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE.

▶ **Max Factor Lipfinity Long Lasting Lipstick in So Luxuriant (left) and Just Deluxe, $23.95 each.** These nourishing oil-based lipsticks are bold and long-lasting – perfect for the party season.

◀ **Bobbi Brown Sterling Nights Eye Palette, $125.** Transition your look from day to night with this sleek palette which features nine neutral and metallic shades.



▶ **Michael Kors 24K Brilliant Gold, 50ml, $110.** Go for gold with this fancy designer fragrance that combines orange mandarin, florals and woodiness.

▲ **Glasshouse Fragrances Night Before Christmas Candle, 350g, $44.95.** Blackcurrant, plum, lavender and lemon have been blended to create this pretty and festive candle.



▲ **Saison Panier Des Sens Essentials gift set, $29.95.** Three divine hand creams that are rich in shea butter and essential oils for soft and supple skin.



▶ **L'Occitane Jasmin Immortelle Neroli Body Lotion, 250ml, $39.** A luxurious and floral body lotion that leaves skin feeling smooth.

▲ **ghd Arctic Gold V Classic Styler, $270.** With a metallic Arctic Gold finish, this limited edition styler is your go-to tool for hair straightening or curls this holiday season.

▶ **Napoleon Perdis Reflective Refiner Bright Light Highlight Powder (left) and Perfecting Blush Powder, $50 each.** For luminous skin and a youthful flush, simply brush on this blush and highlighter.



GETTY IMAGES. STILL-LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS JANSEN. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE.

NEW from freezeframe

Imagine...a luxurious mosturising body oil that also helps you...

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In a real case of why hadn't they invented this before, the body experts at freezeframe have finally released an exclusive oil treatment which can help you achieve both silky smooth skin and a leaner look.

FAT BURNER Dry Body oil is a powerful slimming and mositurising complex which transforms even the driest skin, into moist and silky smooth skin in just 2 days.

Snake skin might look great on a handbag, but if winter has left the skin on your body a dry, scaly mess then this luxurious body oil will have you looking more baby skin than snake skin just in time for summer.

No more roughness, scaliness or cracks.

For super fast results, clinical tests showed that moisture levels in the skin are increased immediately on contact, with a massive 206% improvement in just 48 hours.

But it's the long term results that impressed our panel of experts, with moisture levels in the skin increasing by a factor of 60 in just 28 days.

60 x the moisture for a silky smooth look that will last, thanks to the increase in barrier protection which this multifunctional product also offers.

But whilst the moisturizing properties rightly impressed our experts, it was the way that the oil made trial participants look slimmer which downright astounded them.

The surprise clinical results that revealed up to 2.2 slimmer looking waist and thighs in just four weeks

Participants in a clinical trial were asked to apply product twice daily to legs, waist and hip area. They were asked to do nothing different in their normal routine. No exercise or weight loss treatments.

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WHAT TO SAY *when you're* LOST FOR WORDS

Awkward silences, false cheer and shallow platitudes can turn Christmas lunch into a minefield for anyone dealing with serious illness. So just how can you help those you love most? **Clair Weaver** reports.

WHEN CLAIRE Williams was diagnosed with leukaemia at 13, she was given a lot of hats and casseroles, but felt profoundly alone. She was having treatment alongside much younger kids at a hospital far from home. When she saw her friends, they were awkward and didn't know what to say. She was facing her own mortality at an age when most of us feel invincible. And over Christmas – a time of celebration and cheer – people wanted to avoid the subject at all costs.

"It was isolating," says Claire, who relied on her parents for support. "You are having a life-altering experience and living one day at a time. You learn to put things in perspective and start asking big questions about what you want to do with your life. I started to feel detached from my peers. I didn't know how to communicate with them about what I was feeling."

Irrespective of our age, chronic illness can be the elephant in the room. While most of us know someone affected by cancer, mental illness or other serious diseases (whether a patient, their family or children), it doesn't mean that we intuitively know the best way to react, what to say or how to help. Burst into tears and you may make people feel worse. Too cheerful and you may come across as shallow or patronising. You don't want to be suffocating or disappear in their hour of need. So what can we do to provide the best support we can at a time of year that is known to really put family relationships to the test?

*****

SEEING A LOVED ONE diagnosed with a disease such as cancer forces us to face questions about our own mortality, says Dr Pandora Patterson, who is General Manager of Research, Evaluation and Social Policy at the national youth cancer support organisation CanTeen.

"Being confronted with a friend or relative's diagnosis may also make some people feel guilty about being healthy ➤

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themselves, which only serves to increase their discomfort and sense of helplessness," she says. "You may also feel pressure to be an instant health professional, rather than just continuing to be a friend or family member." So give yourself a break, she says, because not knowing what to do and feeling a level of discomfort is normal. Even saying, "I don't know what to say", is okay.

"Really, it's more about letting them know that you're there for them," says Dr Patterson. "That you are ready to listen, ready to talk and if they don't want to talk, that's okay, too. Just being able to sit with them is important."

You shouldn't feel obliged to shower them with overly lavish presents or offer non-stop entertainment as distraction.

"Often I think we have a culture of trying to sort out the situation and make things better, but there are some life circumstances that are beyond our control," says Dr Patterson. "It's an uncomfortable reality. Learning the art of sitting with uncertainty is a skill we could all get better at."

This becomes even more pertinent at Christmas, when we usually have more free time to spend with loved ones. As well as being a party period, remember, it's also supposed to be a time of sharing, love and compassion.

Surveys show that people who are living with a serious illness may appreciate opportunities to talk about something else other than the state of their health, although it's also okay to check in and ask how they're doing.

Being proactive about giving practical help – such as doing groceries, running errands, feeding pets or picking up the kids – is often appreciated, suggests Dr Patterson. While friends often rush to help after the initial diagnosis, she notes, this tends to dwindle away over time, so co-ordinating an ongoing roster can ensure the support lasts.

*****

ON THE FLIP-SIDE, there are some well-intentioned but unhelpful things that people tend to say and do around people who are seriously ill. Dropping off the radar to "give them some space" isn't recommended and risks exacerbating any sense of loneliness and isolation felt during what is for many one of the most social times of year.

As Alex, whose father died from cancer when she was 19, explains, "I lost a lot of friends at high school. They got sick of me crying all the time and didn't really understand why." Depressed and isolated, she left school. Fortunately, at college, Alex found friends who stood by her through the toughest of times. "They came to visit Dad in the hospice together and went through it all with me," she says.

Offering unconditional friendship and listening time is important, too – don't expect someone who is dealing with cancer or death to be giving back.

Platitudes such as "everything will be fine" aren't reassuring, says Dr Patterson (see box, right) and while it may be tempting to treat your loved one as a hero for enduring illness, that can also backfire, as it adds pressure to maintain a brave face.

"I remember saying to my neighbour, 'I worry I might get sick again'," says Claire Williams, who was a founding member of CanTeen. "She said, 'I never thought you would be like that, I thought you would be really positive.' So I put barriers up because I felt judged."

*****

TALKING TO CHILDREN and young people about illness can be tricky, as our natural response may be to shield them from uncertainty and the possibility of death. Candy canes, Christmas lights and new toys may seem like easier alternatives. Yet withholding information can increase anxiety and distress, so openness is key.

"It's about being truthful and being able to convey that information in a developmentally appropriate way. Families whose communication is good tend to cope better with cancer diagnoses regardless of age," says Dr Patterson.

"It's also about pacing information rather than going open slather and giving young people the opportunity to ask questions, so they can process the information, as well as regularly checking in with them."

*****

WHILE HOW WE talk about illness is important, experiencing it can also change a person's attitude to life – whether it's relishing every moment, enjoying the little things or not sweating the small stuff. There's probably a lesson in it for all of us. Claire, who is now cancer-free and grown-up with children of her own, says, "Life is a temporary experience, so I say think about what you are saying to your children – would it be okay if you weren't around tomorrow?" ■

- **For more information or counselling on helping young people deal with cancer, go to canteen.org.au or phone 1800 835 932.**
- **If this story has raised issues for you, phone Lifeline on 13 11 14.**

WHAT *NOT* TO SAY TO SOMEONE SUFFERING

1 **"I know what you are going through/feeling"** – They are the only person who knows what they are going through (even if you've experienced the same affliction).

2 **"Everything will be fine"** – That may not prove to be true: treatment might not be effective and they may feel unable to express their concerns to you.

3 **"Everything happens for a reason"** – You don't need to find greater significance in their situation – in reality, it's just unfortunate.

4 **"You are so brave/such an inspiration"** – It puts them on a pedestal and puts pressure on them to be perfect.

**Source: Dr Pandora Patterson, CanTeen.*

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ALLERGY RELIEF



There's no question that allergies are a huge issue for millions of Australians and can even be life-threatening. So, as the peak season approaches, **Professor Kerryn Phelps** offers some solutions.

SNEEZING, WHEEZING, itchy eyes and scratchy skin, hives, the constant fear of a life-threatening exposure ... this is the daily reality for the four million Aussies with an allergy of some sort, with the severity ranging from inconvenient to life-threatening. Given the magnitude of the problem, what should we be doing to identify, treat and even beat allergies?

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy has declared the need for a national allergy strategy to help improve the health and quality of life of people with allergic diseases. The strategy's aims are to develop national, standardised and evidence-supported guidelines for the testing, prevention and management of allergies.

Such a strategy would need to involve public awareness of allergic disease and include information about which health professionals are best to investigate and advise people with allergies, as well as the training of health professionals in allergy-testing protocols and the emergency management of anaphylaxis, the most severe form of allergic reaction. It would also target staff in schools, childcare and sporting facilities for allergy and anaphylaxis training. ►

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If symptoms persist see your healthcare professional.

COMMON TYPES OF ALLERGY

An allergy is an overreaction of your immune system to a substance in the environment or something you eat or inhale which is harmless to a person without the allergy.

Allergies can take the form of:

- food allergy
- drug allergy
- insect allergy
- asthma
- eczema
- allergic rhinitis (hay fever)

WHAT IS ANAPHYLAXIS?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that requires emergency medical attention. Exposure to an allergen can cause immediate and life-threatening symptoms: swollen eyes and face; hives and swelling of the tongue and throat causing breathing difficulties; and a drop in blood pressure.

If you have anaphylaxis, you will be advised to carry an auto-injector containing adrenaline, and to wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace.

HOW TO TACKLE YOUR ALLERGY PROBLEM:

- See your doctor if you suspect you have an allergy.
- Arrange scientifically validated allergy testing.
- If your case is more complex, you may need to be referred to an allergy specialist.
- See a dietitian to help you to identify possible hidden food allergens.
- Develop a personalised plan for the prevention and management of your allergies (creams, nasal sprays, asthma sprays, antihistamines and other medications, specialised diet plan).
- Be assertive. Ask questions of hospitality staff. If you are going to a function, contact the catering staff in advance so they can prepare a special meal for you.
- If you are a guest in someone's home for a meal, let them know in advance of your food allergies.
- Read food labels carefully.
- For severe allergies, make sure people around you know that you have an allergy
- If you have anaphylaxis, always carry your adrenaline auto-injector.
- Dial 000 in case of medical emergency.



Itchy eyes can be a sign of an allergic reaction.

HOW TO TREAT YOUR ALLERGY

If you or someone in your family has a problem with allergies, you will know the effect it can have on your life.

Depending on your type and severity of allergic responses, daily nose sprays, asthma preventers and relievers, steroid creams and moisturisers, antihistamines, steroid tablets and adrenaline injectors can be involved in allergy management.

People with allergies are always advised to do anything they can to avoid known allergy triggers. However, this can be more difficult than it sounds. Environmental allergens, such as plant pollens or insect stings, can be impossible to avoid altogether unless you live in a sealed bubble.

Accidental exposure is a constant risk for people with severe allergies, particularly those with severe food allergies. Ingredients in restaurant food are not always listed on menus or disclosed by restaurant staff.

There is also a wide variation in the allergy training of hospitality staff, although it has improved dramatically over the past decade with increased awareness. ■

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Why it's important to look after your BOWEL HEALTH as you get older

For many, getting older is the time to truly enjoy life, the chapter when priorities change and your leisure, travel and family time becomes more significant.

That's why it's important to look after our health as we get older.

A good way to start is to maintain a healthy bowel and colon. Many believe this is the core to good health.That's why at Nature's Way, we created **Restore Bowel & Colon**, a specialist formula developed specifically to maintain a healthy bowel and colon as you age.

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Try **Restore Bowel & Colon** from Nature's Way.



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www.naturesway.com.au/restore

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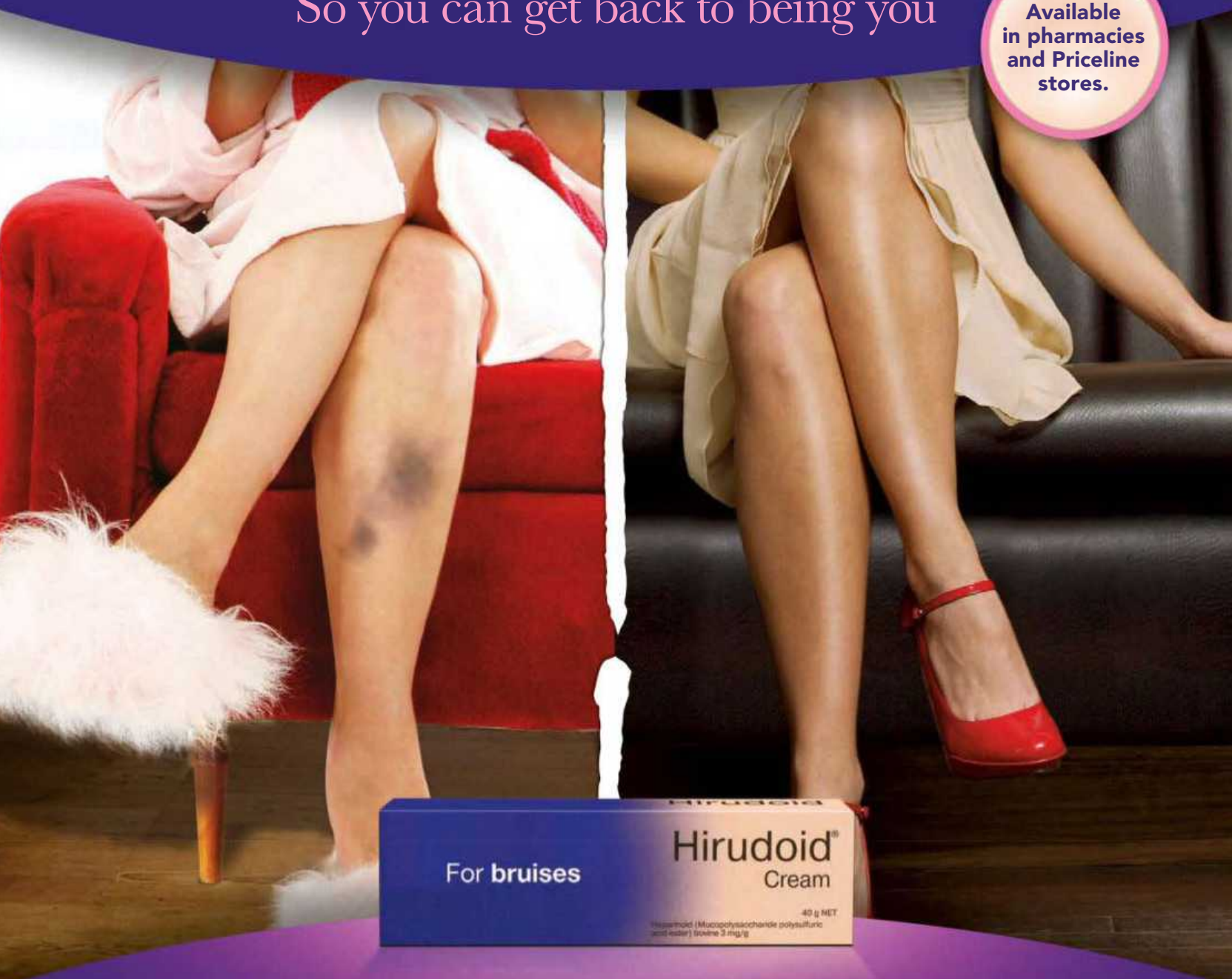
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* In one study of 10 healthy volunteers, the time it took for 50% of the bruise to be absorbed was 2.1 days for Hirudoid and 4 days for the inactive cream. Research conducted by B. Larsson, S. Fiance, A. Jonasson & B. Forsskahl. Financial sponsor of research unknown.

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ASMI 25422-1015

Ask the doctor

Professor Kerryn Phelps discusses the dangers of codeine and answers readers' questions about health issues.



Q I get sore "fringy" bits around my fingernails in winter which sometimes become bulbous and red. Is there a cream that can help? *C.E., Qld.*

This is called paronychia, inflammation of the skin around a nail. If you bite or pick around your nails this increases the risk of infection. The soreness and swelling you describe is usually caused by a bacterial infection with staphylococcus. You need to trim the irregular skin carefully with specialised manicure tools, or to have a regular professional manicure.

Q My daughter reads late into the night. She keeps taking my husband's torch from his toolbox because we removed the lightbulb from her bedside lamp! Other mothers tell me I am lucky because she could be up on a computer, but she already wears glasses and I am worried about her eyesight being ruined. Do you have any advice? *F.B., WA.*

Reading in dim light will not affect her eyesight. On the plus side, she is reading, which is a struggle for some parents to achieve. The only problem I see is with her sleep time and this needs to be enforced. Return the lightbulb, negotiate reasonable reading time and then lights out.

Q My mum is in her 80s and is recovering from cancer surgery nearly two years ago. She keeps saying she is hoarding her tablets – cortisone – because she doesn't want to live. We only live a short distance from her, but I am so worried. I want her to move in with us, but we have three kids and a small plot. My hubby says she is crying wolf, but how do I know? It could be too late. *M.C., Vic.*

This rings alarm bells. Your mum is clearly distressed and needs help. You need to talk to her about why she feels her life is not worth living. Is she lonely? In pain? Arrange a visit to her GP, who can assess her and arrange appropriate medical treatment or counselling and connect her with local community services.

Q My little boy likes to sleep in the dog basket with our labrador retriever. My partner says it is unhealthy, but our dog is clean and it is only for short naps – what do you think? *F.G., Tas.*

It sounds like your son and your dog have a lovely relationship. Provided they are supervised and the dog has no history of aggression, there is very little risk to your son's health. Make sure the dog has regular vet checks and wash the blanket and cushions in the dog basket regularly.

Q I never have time to dry my hair after the gym and have had a lot of colds this winter. My workmate says it is because I don't dry my hair, but I think this is an old wives' tale. Can you tell me if it is dangerous to go out in the cold with wet hair? *S.S., NSW.*

The research on this is inconsistent. To catch a cold, you need to come in contact with the virus and be vulnerable to infection. There are more cold and flu viruses around in the colder months. The state of your immune system will determine how vulnerable you are. It's probably not a problem to go out with wet hair, but I still make my children dry their hair before they go out in cold weather. ■

Codeine alert

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has reclassified all over-the-counter medicines containing codeine as prescription-only medicines. Codeine is an opioid pain reliever used to treat mild to moderately severe pain and is also used to reduce coughing. This decision came as a response to concerns about overdose, as well as adverse effects of combinations such as liver damage (with paracetamol) and gut problems (with ibuprofen). The rate of codeine-related deaths more than doubled from 2000-2009, and many deaths were related to drug combinations.

HAVE A QUESTION? If you have a question for Professor Kerryn Phelps, write to: Ask The Doctor, GPO Box 4178, Sydney, NSW 2001 or email openline@bauer-media.com.au. Letters cannot be answered personally. See the Contents page in this issue for the location of Bauer Media Limited's Privacy Notice.

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JESSICA AND PIPPA, THE JACK RUSSEL CHIHUAHUA CROSS

She's the boss!

"The second I saw her, I knew she had attitude," laughs Jessica Halkett, owner of Pippa, the Jack Russell-Chihuahua cross. "She was four months old when she came to live with me, and while she had been an outside dog at her previous home, she quickly became used to being an extremely loved, inside dog in our home!

"In fact, the day after Pippa became my girl, I took her to Mum's house. After a while, Mum looked at her pup, Tasha, as well as Pippa and said, 'Time for the dogs to go outside!' Pippa just looked back at her, barked and walked off to bed, as if to say, 'No way, I'm an inside dog now!' Mum and I were in stitches laughing.

"She has this bossy little attitude, but she is always such a happy little dog and so incredibly loving. I love that she can always make me smile, no matter how upset I might be. She is always there for me. She is mine and my partner's entire world!

"Our favourite thing to do is snuggle up on the sofa together and watch TV, although we do have heaps of fun moments playing fetch and tug of war."

"She is always there for me. She is mine and my partner's entire world!"



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"Teddy is not just a pet – he is a family member. He sleeps on our bed, watches TV with us and soaks up the sun whenever we are outside.

"His favourite time of day is meal time, of course, and he especially loves the days we serve him MY DOG® Home Recipe with Free Range Chicken, or of course, anything that our children might be eating!"

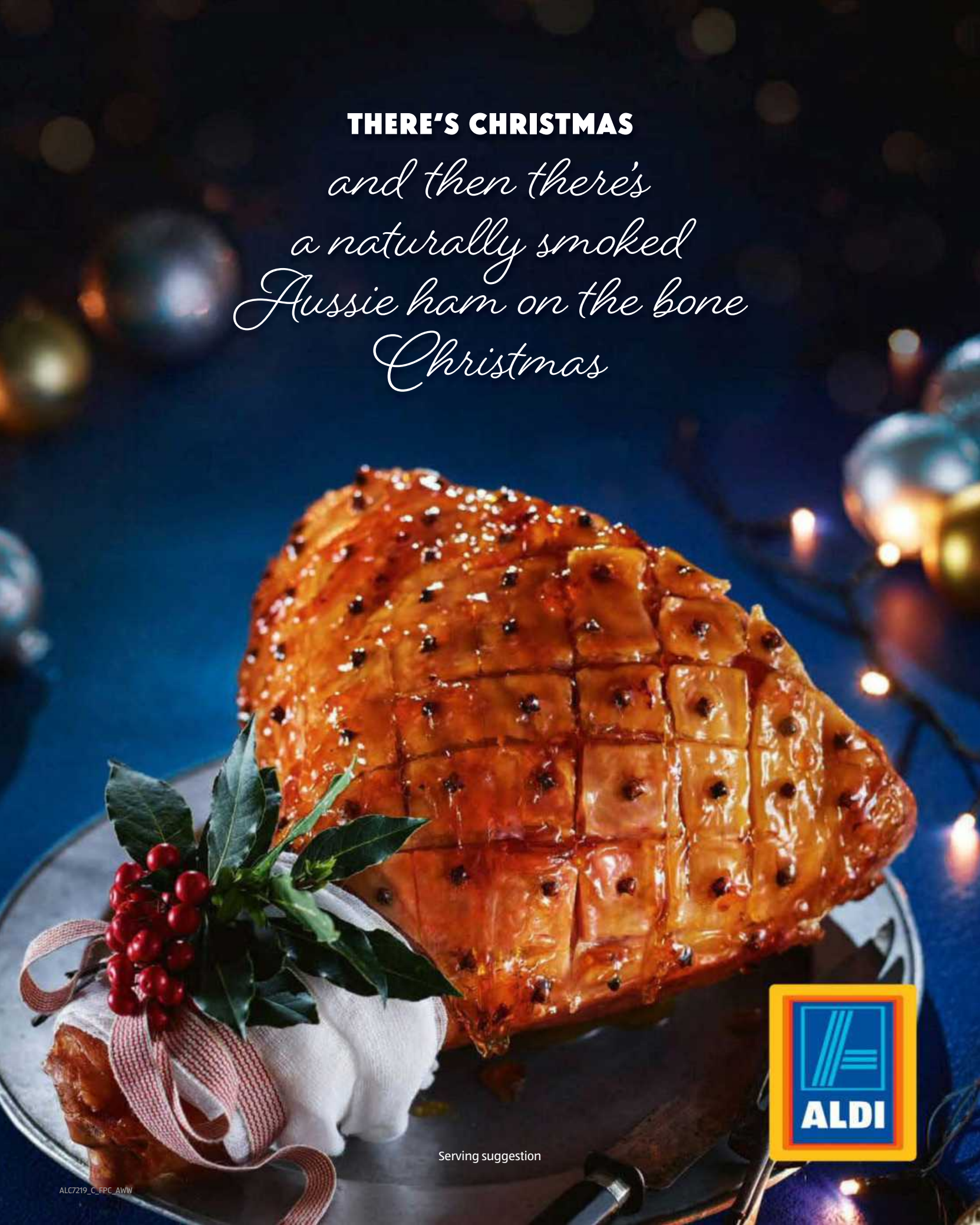
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and then there's
a naturally smoked
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Merry Christmas

75 PAGES of fabulous ideas

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Festive meals ☆ Party food ☆ Craft projects ☆ Decorating the tree

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOUISE LISTER. STYLING BY LUCY TWEED. RODIN CHAIR AND RED HANGING ORNAMENTS FROM RUBY STAR TRADERS. STANDING SILVER CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENTS FROM STONELEIGH GALLERY.





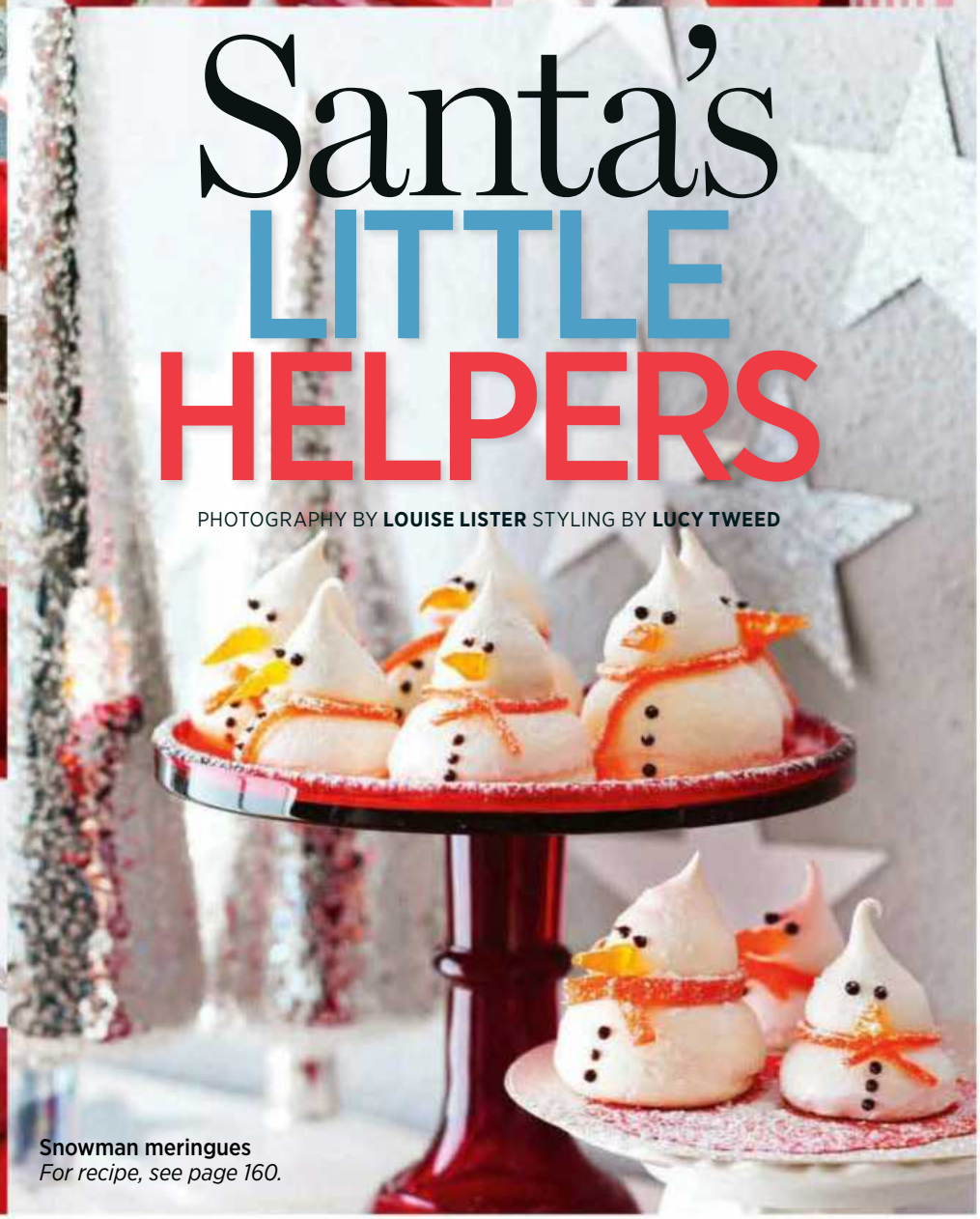




Santa's LITTLE HELPERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LOUISE LISTER** STYLING BY **LUCY TWEED**





Snowman meringues
For recipe, see page 160.

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY. SUNDVIK CHILDREN'S TABLE AND CHAIRS, ADUM ROUND RUG, LUDVIG SHEEPSKIN RUG, ALL FROM IKEA. RODIN CHAIR IN RED FROM RUBY STAR TRADERS. RED PAPER GARLAND FROM PAPER COUTURE. SILVER CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENTS (ON MANTEL) FROM STONELEIGH GALLERY. TICKING STRIPE WALLPAPER FROM EMILY ZIZ. STAR DECORATIONS IN SILVER AND RED FROM RUBY STAR TRADERS. RED SHORTS AND STAR TIGHTS WORN BY MODELS FROM COTTON ON KIDS.



Have some Christmas fun with the kids making our bunch of yummy easy treats that will have them dancing with delight.



Test Kitchen tips: The ice-cream cake, without the strawberries, will keep covered in the freezer for up to one month. The strawberry Santas are best made on the day of serving. Leftover Butter Cream can be tinted or used as is to decorate cakes or cupcakes. It can be frozen for up to a month, but must be re-beaten before using.

Santa ice-cream cake



Santa ice-cream cake

SERVES 14 PREP TIME 1 HOUR (+ FREEZING TIME)

220g chocolate Ice Magic (flavoured ice-cream coating)
2 litres good-quality vanilla ice-cream
100g white chocolate freckles
¼ cup (40g) red sour worms or jubes, chopped coarsely
500g large strawberries
brown and white writing icing

BUTTER CREAM

125g butter, softened
1½ cups (240g) icing sugar mixture
1 tablespoon milk

1 Grease a 20cm springform pan and line the base and side with a double layer of baking paper extending 6cm above the rim of the pan.
2 Squeeze the Ice Magic over the base of the prepared pan and spread to cover surface. Tap on bench to settle. Place in the freezer until set.
3 Scoop the ice-cream into a bowl and stand at room temperature for 5-10 minutes or until softened slightly. Stir in freckles and sour worms. Spoon over the chocolate base; press down with the back of a spoon to create an even surface. Cover and freeze overnight.
4 **BUTTER CREAM:** Beat butter in a small bowl with an electric mixer until as white as possible. Beat in sifted icing sugar and milk, in two batches.
5 To make the strawberry Santas, trim leafy end off each strawberry so they stand up straight. Place onto paper towels to absorb excess moisture. Slice the tip off for the hat.
6 Spoon Butter Cream into a piping bag fitted with a small (about 7mm) plain nozzle, pipe a small round of cream onto each strawberry base for the head, then pipe around the base to make a thick scarf. Pipe a small round of Butter Cream onto the tip of the strawberry for the tip of the hat. Use white writing icing to make small "buttons" on the base of the strawberries. Use brown writing icing to make eyes and a smiley face.
7 Remove the ice-cream cake from freezer and unmould onto a cake stand or plate. Position the strawberry Santas on top and around to decorate.
Suitable to freeze.



Christmas tree sandwiches

Christmas tree sandwiches

MAKES 16 PREP AND COOK TIME 20 MINUTES

2 cups (280g) finely chopped cooked chicken
⅔ cup (200g) whole-egg mayonnaise
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives, plus extra, to serve
½ (70g) Lebanese cucumber, seeds removed, chopped finely
30g butter, softened
16 slices thick ("toast") white bread

1 Combine chicken, mayonnaise, chives and cucumber in a medium bowl.
2 Spread butter over bread slices. Divide chicken mixture evenly among half the bread slices; top with remaining bread slices.
3 Using a very sharp knife, cut each sandwich into two long triangular tree shapes. Discard or eat crusts and off-cuts. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate if not serving straight away.
4 Just before serving, stand sandwiches upright on serving platter and scatter with extra chives, if desired.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Use an electric knife to cut tree shapes, if you have one available.

RED PAPER GARLAND FROM PAPER COUTURE. STANDING SILVER CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENTS FROM STONELEIGH GALLERY. CURTAIN LANTERN STRAND FROM TYPO.

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Aussie Rudolph sandwiches



Fruity cubes

> These Ruldolph sandwiches are quick to make and lots of fun for lunch in the exciting lead-up to Christmas.

Aussie Rudolph sandwiches

MAKES 4 PREP AND COOK TIME 20 MINUTES

softened butter and Vegemite, to taste
16 slices brown bread
2 mini bocconcini, sliced thinly
4 small black grapes, blueberries or olives
2 cherry tomatoes

1 Spread butter and Vegemite over four slices of bread; top with four more bread slices to make four Vegemite sandwiches. Cut off crusts (reserve some of the crusts) and round edges to make the head shape.
2 Using kitchen scissors, cut out a "B" shape from four more pieces of bread for the snout. Spread with butter and Vegemite, then flip and turn on side; secure on top of sandwiches.
3 Cut four petal shapes from each of two of the remaining slices of bread to make eight ears. Cut eight smaller petal shapes from the crusts to make the inner ear detail; use butter to secure to ear. Secure two ears to the side of each reindeer head.
4 To make antlers, spread butter and Vegemite over remaining bread; cut eight jagged shapes from bread and secure to top of reindeer heads.
5 Place two slices of bocconcini on each reindeer face. Cut a small slice from the end of each grape or olive or halve blueberries crossways for pupils. Position on bocconcini for eyes.
6 Cut tomatoes in half crossways; position on faces to makes nose.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Using sharp kitchen scissors is by far the easiest way to cut bread into required shapes.

For more fun recipes for kids, go to FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU



Fruity cubes

MAKES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 20 MINUTES

⅛ (700g) ripe watermelon (approximately)
4-5 large (500g) kiwifruit

1 Slice watermelon into 2cm slices, then cut into 16 x 2cm cubes.
2 Peel kiwifruit, quarter exactly lengthways and cut into 2cm cubes with a sharp knife.
3 Arrange watermelon and kiwifruit (placing alternately, as pictured above) into cubes.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

SUNDVIK CHILDREN'S TABLE FROM IKEA. SNOWFLAKE ORNAMENTS FROM PAPAYA.



Snowman meringues



Marshmallow treats



Snowman meringues

MAKES **ABOUT 20** PREP AND COOK TIME **2 HOURS (+ COOLING TIME)**

4 egg whites
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
3 sour strawberry straps
5 orange jubes
black writing icing

1 Preheat the oven to 120°C (100°C fan-forced). Line a large baking tray with baking paper.
2 Beat the egg whites in a small bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form; gradually add the sugar, beating until sugar dissolves between additions.
3 Spoon meringue mixture into a piping bag fitted with a 1.5cm plain nozzle. Pipe 20 balls of meringue, about 4cm in diameter, onto prepared tray, leaving space between each. Pipe a smaller round ball on top of each meringue to make a snowman shape. Bake for 1 hour 30 minutes or until dry to the touch. Cool completely before decorating.
4 Cut the sour straps into long, thin strips (stretch the pieces if needed to get enough length); position one strip around each snowman's neck to make a scarf.
5 Cut each jube into four triangular pieces lengthways to form a pointed nose. Trim off sugar coating and position nose in the centre of the snowman's face.
6 Draw eyes and a mouth on each snowman's face and buttons on the body using writing icing. Dust with icing sugar, if desired.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: The meringues can be made a week ahead. Store in a single layer in an airtight container.

Marshmallow treats

MAKES **24** PREP AND COOK TIME **15 MINUTES**

40g butter
2 cups (190g) white marshmallows
3 cups (120g) Rice Bubbles
½ cup (40g) desiccated coconut
½ cup (140g) red and green M&M's

1 Lightly grease a 20cm x 30cm lamington pan; line base and long sides with a piece of baking paper, allowing a 5cm overhang.
2 Combine butter and marshmallows in a medium saucepan over low heat; stir until melted and smooth. Cool.
3 Place the Rice Bubbles, coconut and M&M's in a large bowl. Pour over marshmallow mixture; stir with an oiled spoon until combined. Spoon mixture into prepared pan; refrigerate several hours or until set. Cut into pieces.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: This recipe can be made a week ahead. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

LUDVIG SHEEPSKIN RUG FROM IKEA.

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A bush Celebration

We head to the country for a truly Aussie Christmas feast celebrating local Australian beef and pork.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOHN PAUL URIZAR**
STYLING BY **DAVID MORGAN**



Macadamia and fig steamed pudding
For recipe, see page 168.



Beef rib roast with herb mustard crust
For recipe, see page 166.

Test Kitchen tip: Insert a meat thermometer in the centre of the thickest part of the meat, without touching the bone. It should reach 60°C for rare, 65°C-70°C for medium and 70°C-75°C for well done.

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY. THANKS TO MARTIN BOETZ FROM COOKS CO-OP IN SACKVILLE, NSW, FOR HOSTING *THE WEEKLY'S* PHOTO SHOOT. COOKSCO-OP.COM.

For more Christmas recipe ideas, go to
FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU



Devils on horseback, smoked oysters and smoked trout on pumpernickel

Retro starter platter

DEVILS ON HORSEBACK

MAKES **10** PREP AND COOK TIME **15 MINUTES**
(+ STANDING TIME)

10 (90g) pitted prunes
2 teaspoons brandy
5 thin slices cured bacon, halved diagonally
2 teaspoons olive oil

1 Combine prunes and brandy in a small bowl. Cover; stand for several hours or overnight.
2 Roll each prune in a piece of bacon; secure with a toothpick.
3 Heat the oil in a medium frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook wrapped prunes for 3 minutes on each side or until lightly browned.
4 Serve warm.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

SMOKED OYSTERS AND SMOKED OCEAN TROUT ON PUMPERNICKEL

MAKES **24** PREP AND COOK TIME **15 MINUTES**
(+ COOLING TIME)

⅓ cup (80g) crème fraîche
1 tablespoon horseradish cream
4 slices pumpernickel bread
85g packet (10) smoked oysters
1 medium (140g) lemon
4 small pickled onions, quartered lengthways
50g smoked ocean trout, cut into 14 pieces
fennel fronds or dill sprigs, to serve

1 Combine crème fraîche and horseradish in a small bowl; stir until just combined.
2 Toast the bread; cool. Cut each slice into six squares.
3 Divide crème fraîche mixture between toast squares. Top 10 of the squares with an oyster. Finely grate lemon rind over oysters; top with a little freshly ground black pepper.
4 Top remaining squares with a pickled onion quarter wrapped loosely with a piece of the smoked trout. Garnish with the fennel or dill and season to taste.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Lemon hasselback potatoes

SERVES **10** PREP AND COOK TIME **1 HOUR 45 MINUTES**

60g butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind
1 tablespoon lemon juice
10 (2kg) medium desiree potatoes, peeled

1 Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
2 Heat the butter, oil, rind and juice in a small saucepan over low heat until the butter has melted. Remove from heat.
3 Place the potatoes on a chopping board. Working with one at a time, place a chopstick on the board along each side of the potato. Slice potato thinly, cutting through to the chopsticks to prevent cutting all the way through; you'll need to stop higher at the ends to avoid cutting through. Repeat with the remaining potatoes.
4 Place potatoes in a large shallow baking dish, cut-side up. Brush half the butter mixture all over the potatoes; sprinkle potatoes well with lightly crushed sea salt. Roast potatoes for 1 hour. Brush again with the butter mixture. Roast for a further 30 minutes or until deep golden brown and tender.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: If you are cooking the potatoes with a roast at a higher temperature, reduce the cooking time of the potatoes.

Sweet carrot, spinach and currant salad

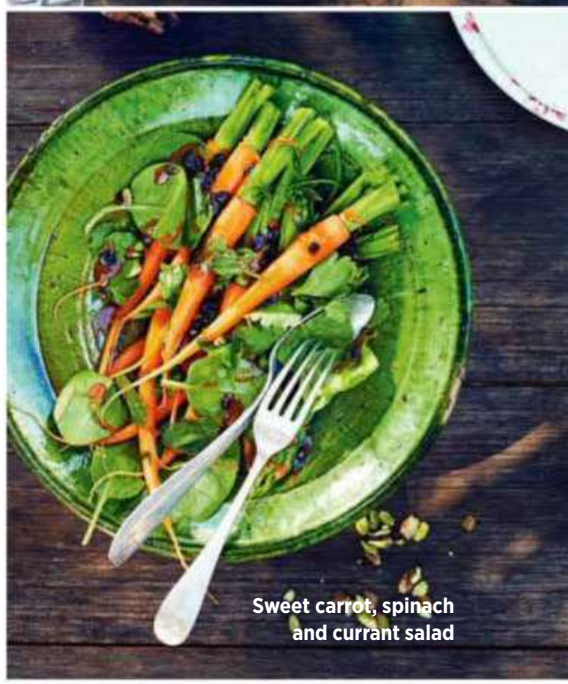
SERVES **8-10** PREP AND COOK TIME **25 MINUTES**

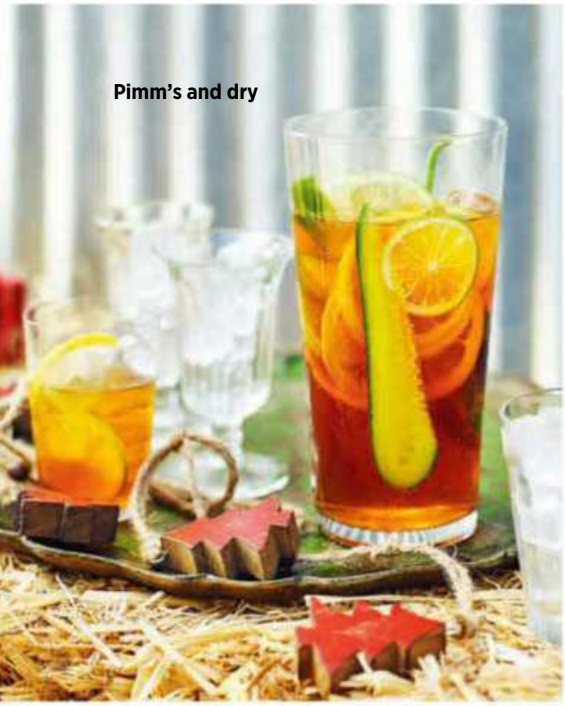
3 bunches baby (Dutch) carrots, peeled, trimmed
100g baby spinach leaves
2 cups loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
¾ cup (100g) shelled pistachios
HONEY DRESSING
40g butter
¼ cup (90g) honey
2 teaspoons sherry vinegar
1 teaspoon orange flower water
1 tablespoon lemon juice
¼ cup (40g) dried currants

1 HONEY DRESSING: Heat butter in a small saucepan over medium heat until the butter turns brown; add honey, vinegar, orange flower water and juice. Bring to the boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 1 minute. Remove from heat; add currants. Season to taste with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.
2 Add carrots to a large saucepan of boiling salted water; boil, uncovered, for 2-3 minutes or until just tender. Drain; transfer to a bowl. Drizzle carrots with some of the Honey Dressing; cool.
3 Toss cooled carrots with spinach, parsley and most of the pistachios. Arrange on a serving platter; drizzle with the remaining dressing and pistachios.
Not suitable to freeze. Suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Orange flower (or blossom) water is available from some delicatessens. You can omit it, if you prefer.


Lemon hasselback potatoes


Sweet carrot, spinach and currant salad



Pimm's and dry



Plums from roast pork recipe

Pimm's and dry

SERVES **10** PREP TIME **5 MINUTES**

2 cups (500ml) Pimm's No. 1
1.25 litres (5 cups) dry ginger ale
1 Lebanese cucumber, sliced thinly lengthways
1 orange, sliced thinly
1 lemon, sliced thinly
1 lime, sliced thinly
4 cups ice cubes

1 Combine all ingredients in a large jug or bowl.

Roast pork loin with plums and garden herbs

SERVES **8-10** PREP AND COOK TIME **2 HOURS**
(+ OVERNIGHT REFRIGERATION AND STANDING TIME)

2.5kg boneless loin of pork, rind on, scored
1 small bunch fresh rosemary
½ bunch bay leaves
⅓ cup (80ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon coarse cooking salt
4 medium (600g) red onions, quartered
8 medium (1.2kg) plums, halved, seeded
CHESTNUT STUFFING
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
200g pancetta in a piece (or bacon), chopped finely
2 medium (300g) brown onions, chopped finely
4 cloves garlic, crushed
425g can whole chestnuts, rinsed, drained, chopped coarsely
1 cup finely chopped fresh curly parsley
3 cups (200g) stale breadcrumbs
2 teaspoons finely grated orange rind
2 eggs, beaten lightly

1 Pat the pork rind dry; place on a plate. Refrigerate, skin-side up, uncovered, to allow rind to dry out overnight.
2 CHESTNUT STUFFING: Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook the pancetta, stirring, for 3 minutes or until lightly browned. Reduce heat to medium; cook onion and garlic, stirring, for about 5 minutes or until browned lightly and softened. Transfer to a large bowl; add the remaining ingredients. Season well; cool.
3 Preheat oven to 240°C (220°C fan-forced).
4 Press Chestnut Stuffing down the centre of pork. Roll pork to enclose stuffing; secure with kitchen string at 2cm intervals.
5 Arrange rosemary and bay leaves over the base of a shallow medium baking dish. Place pork on top of the herbs. Rub 1 tablespoon of the oil over pork rind; rub with salt. Roast pork, uncovered, for 30 minutes or until rind is blistered and browned. (There may be smoke in the oven from the fat at this stage.) Reduce oven temperature to 180°C (160°C fan-forced) and roast pork for another 25 minutes.
6 Meanwhile, line an oven tray with baking paper. Place the onion and plums on the tray. Drizzle with the remaining oil.
7 Add plum mixture to the oven. Roast plum mixture and pork for a further 30 minutes or until juices run clear when a skewer is inserted into the side of the roast. If using a meat thermometer, it should register 70°C-75°C in the centre. Remove pork from oven; stand, covered loosely with foil, for 10 minutes.
8 Serve sliced pork with the plum mixture.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Beef rib roast with herb mustard crust

SERVES **10** PREP AND COOK TIME **2 HOURS**
(+ STANDING TIME)

3kg beef standing rib roast
¼ cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil
10 cloves garlic, skin on
⅓ cup (80ml) red wine
¼ cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil, extra
1 medium (140g) lemon
HERB MUSTARD CRUST
1 bunch sage
⅓ cup (95g) English mustard
1½ tablespoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves

1 Preheat oven to 220°C (200°C fan-forced). Take the beef out of the fridge 1 hour before cooking to bring to room temperature.
2 HERB MUSTARD CRUST: Thinly slice 12 sage leaves; reserve remaining for serving. Combine sliced sage with the remaining ingredients in a small bowl; stir to combine.
3 Line a shallow baking dish with baking paper. Place beef on paper; rub the Herb Mustard Crust over the beef and season well with sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Roast beef for 20 minutes or until browned lightly. Reduce oven temperature to 180°C (160°C fan-forced); roast for 20 minutes. Add garlic to dish; roast for 1 hour or until cooked to your liking and garlic is soft and caramelised.
4 Remove baking dish from the oven. Spoon the wine over the beef; drizzle with the remaining oil. Wrap beef in two layers of foil, then a dry tea towel. Stand for 30 minutes.
5 Heat extra oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add reserved sage leaves; cook for 2 minutes, stirring, until darker green and crisp. Remove from pan with a slotted spoon; drain on paper towel.
6 Remove rind from lemon with a zester (or, peel using a vegetable peeler; cut rind into long thin strips). Place beef on a serving platter; scatter with crisp sage and rind. Drizzle with some of the pan juices and serve with garlic.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.



Roast pork loin with plums and garden herbs

Test Kitchen tip: The stuffing can be prepared the day before roasting. Ask the butcher to score the rind about 5mm apart. You will need a Stanley knife to do it yourself.





Macadamia and fig steamed pudding

Macadamia and fig steamed pudding

SERVES **10** PREP AND COOK TIME **4 HOURS (+ OVERNIGHT SOAKING TIME)**

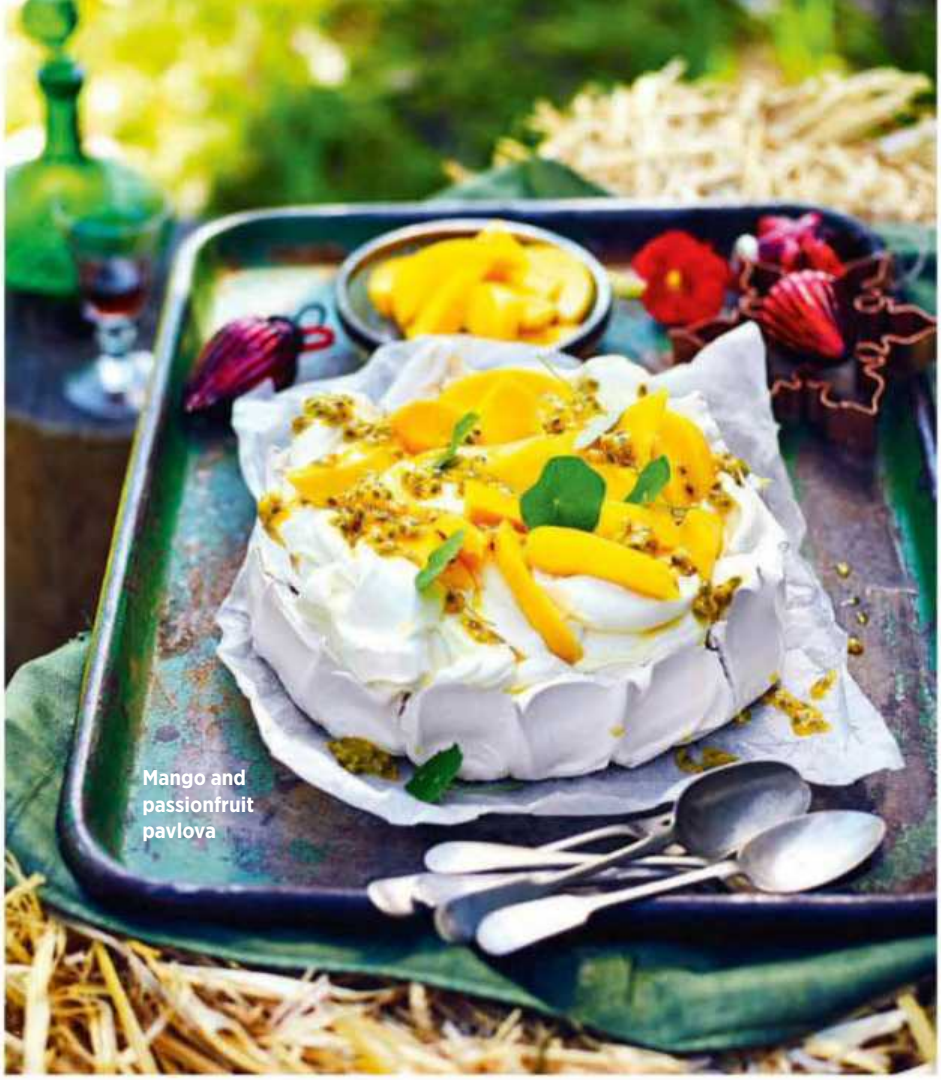
⅔ cup (100g) dried currants
1½ cups (250g) sultanas
¾ cup (150g) chopped soft and juicy figs
½ cup (125ml) dark rum
125g butter, softened
½ cup (110g) firmly packed dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons maple syrup
3 eggs
½ cup (75g) self-raising flour
1 teaspoon mixed spice
1¼ cups (85g) stale white breadcrumbs
¾ cup (100g) macadamias, toasted, chopped

FIG AND NUT TOPPING

125g butter, chopped
½ cup (110g) firmly packed dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons maple syrup
½ cup (100g) chopped soft and juicy figs
⅓ cup (50g) macadamias, toasted, chopped coarsely
2 tablespoons dark rum

1 Combine the currants, sultanas, figs and rum in a large bowl; cover, stand at room temperature overnight or for several days, stirring occasionally, until rum is absorbed.
2 Grease a 2-litre (8-cup) pudding basin with a little melted butter. Line the base with a round of baking paper.
3 Beat butter, sugar and maple syrup in a small bowl with an electric mixer until just combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating until combined between additions. Mixture may appear curdled at this stage. Stir the butter mixture into the fruit mixture, then stir in the combined sifted flour and spice, breadcrumbs and nuts; mix well.
4 Place a 30cm sheet of foil on bench; spray with cooking oil. Top with a 30cm sheet of baking paper. Fold a 5cm pleat crossways through both layers. Place sheets, baking paper-side down, over basin; secure around basin with string or lid. Make handles using string tied across the top. Trim away excess foil and paper, leaving about 4cm. Crush excess foil around string or lid to help form a good seal.
5 Place pudding basin in a large saucepan with enough boiling water to come halfway up side of basin. Cover pan with a tight-fitting lid; boil for 3 hours or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the pudding comes out clean. Replenish with boiling water as needed to maintain boil and water level during cooking.
6 FIG AND NUT TOPPING: Meanwhile, combine the butter, sugar and syrup in a medium saucepan over medium heat; stir until the sugar is dissolved. Add figs; simmer, uncovered, for 3 minutes or until thickened slightly; stir in the nuts and rum. Cool to warm.
7 Stand pudding for 5 minutes before turning out onto a serving plate. Pour half the Fig and Nut Topping over the pudding; serve with the remaining topping. Decorate with leaves and flowers, if desired. Remove before serving.
Suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Pudding can be made 1 month ahead; store covered, in the fridge, or freeze for up to 6 months. Serve with custard, cream or ice-cream.
TO REHEAT: If pudding is frozen, thaw for 2 days in the fridge. Stand pudding at room temperature for 12 hours before reheating. Return pudding to basin; cover and cook as per recipe for 1½ hours.
TO MICROWAVE: Reheat the whole room-temperature pudding (see above) on a microwave-safe plate on MEDIUM for about 10 minutes or until hot. Reheat four single serves at once on a microwave-safe plate on HIGH for about 1½ minutes or until hot.



Mango and passionfruit pavlova



Rum balls

Rum balls

MAKES **40** PREP AND COOK TIME **20 MINUTES**

250g plain biscuits (such as Marie)
395g can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup (80g) desiccated coconut
¼ cup (25g) cocoa powder
1 teaspoon finely grated orange rind
¼ cup (60ml) dark rum
½ cup (40g) desiccated coconut, toasted, extra

1 Process biscuits until fine crumbs.
2 Transfer crumbs to a large bowl; add the condensed milk, coconut, sifted cocoa, rind and rum. Stir well to combine.
3 Roll mixture into walnut-sized balls. Toss balls in extra coconut. Place on a tray; cover, refrigerate until firm.
Suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Coconut can be toasted in a frying pan; stir occasionally over medium heat until golden. Cool. Balls can be made 1 month ahead, refrigerated.

Mango and passionfruit pavlova

SERVES **8-10** PREP AND COOK TIME **2 HOURS (+ COOLING TIME)**

6 egg whites
pinch cream of tartar
1½ cups (330g) caster sugar
1 tablespoon cornflour
1½ teaspoons white vinegar
600ml thickened cream
2 teaspoons vanilla bean paste
1 tablespoon icing sugar
2 large (1.2kg) mangoes, peeled, sliced thickly
4 fresh passionfruit
nasturtium or mint leaves, to serve

1 Preheat oven to 120°C (100°C fan-forced). Grease an ovenproof serving platter with a little softened butter; dust with a little cornflour and shake away excess. (Or draw a 22cm round on baking paper; invert paper onto a lightly greased large oven tray.)
2 Beat egg whites and cream of tartar in a medium bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add the caster sugar, beating until sugar dissolves between additions. Continue beating until the sugar is completely dissolved at this stage. Reduce the speed to low; beat in the cornflour and vinegar until just combined.
3 Spoon the meringue onto the prepared platter to about 22cm round; the mixture will spread slightly. Use the back of a spoon to shape the side of the pavlova. Make a slight indent in the top. Bake pavlova, uncovered, for about 1½ hours or until dry to touch. Turn the oven off; cool pavlova in the oven with the door slightly ajar.
4 Just before serving, beat the cream, vanilla and icing sugar in a small bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Spoon the cream over the pavlova. Top with mango, passionfruit pulp and the leaves.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tips: If you are cooking the pavlova on the serving platter, make sure it will fit into your oven before you start. There are many inexpensive, sturdy porcelain serving platters available. Don't use delicate bone china or highly decorated platters. The pavlova can be made to the end of Step 3 up to two days ahead; store in an airtight container in a cool dry place. In humid weather, make a day ahead. Decorate close to serving.



Christmas Eve BUFFET

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOHN PAUL URIZAR** STYLING BY **MICHAELA LE COMPTE**

This festive season, **Michele Cranston** creates a stylishly simple menu for the perfect shared table.

Baked cherry ham with cherry and nectarine relish
For recipe, see page 177.

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY. AQUA PAINT ON BACKGROUND FROM PORTER'S PAINTS, PORTERSPAINTS.COM.



Left: Red rice salad *For recipe, see page 174.* **Below: The cherry ham is superb topped with sliced fresh figs and watercress sprigs.**



Turkey, cherry and pomegranate salad

Turkey, cherry and pomegranate salad

SERVES 8-10 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES

18 (70g) preserved vine leaves, rinsed, dried on paper towel
8 thin slices (100g) prosciutto
1 (650g) turkey breast fillet, halved lengthways
1 cup (250ml) chicken stock
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup (140g) almond kernels, toasted, chopped coarsely
200g green beans, trimmed, sliced in half lengthways
½ cup (125ml) extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
500g cherries, halved, seeded
3 (450g) ripe tomatoes, seeded, chopped
1 pomegranate, arils (seeds) removed
½ cup firmly packed fresh mint leaves
4 green onions (green shallots), trimmed, finely sliced

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan forced).
2 Place a large sheet of baking paper on the bench and then arrange the vine leaves slightly overlapping the paper to form a rectangle about 30cm x 35cm. Cover leaves with the prosciutto slices and lay the turkey breast halves along the centre (joining the thinner ends together to form an even thickness). Wrap the prosciutto and vine leaves around the turkey breast. Wrap the paper over and around the vine leaf-wrapped turkey, twisting the paper ends together, then place into a baking dish. Pour the stock and lemon juice around the parcel.
3 Bake for 40 minutes or until the turkey is just cooked through. Leave covered and set aside to cool. Slice the turkey into 1cm slices, then return the slices to the tray to soak up some of the cooking juices.
4 Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil and blanch the beans. Drain and refresh under cold water.
5 Place the olive oil, vinegar and 2 tablespoons of the turkey cooking juices in a screw-top jar, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Shake until well combined.
6 On a serving platter, combine the cherries, tomatoes, pomegranate arils, mint, onion and blanched green beans. Pour over the dressing and toss gently to combine. Top with the sliced turkey and the chopped almonds.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.



Spiced flatbreads with parmesan mascarpone

Spiced flatbreads with parmesan mascarpone

MAKES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR (+ RESTING TIME)

1¼ cups (185g) plain flour
1¼ cups (185g) self-raising flour
1 cup (250ml) buttermilk
¾ cup (90g) almond meal (ground almonds)
⅔ cup (80g) finely chopped dried cranberries
2 teaspoons mixed spice
2 teaspoons sea salt flakes
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
PARMESAN MASCARPONE
250g mascarpone
1 small clove garlic, grated finely
¾ cup (60g) finely grated parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons milk

1 Sift flours into a large mixing bowl. Add the buttermilk and mix until combined. Turn mixture out onto lightly floured surface, knead for about 5-10 minutes or until it forms a smooth elastic dough. Cover with a clean damp cloth and rest for 30 minutes.
2 PARMESAN MASCARPONE: Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl; refrigerate until ready to serve.
3 Meanwhile, combine the almond meal, cranberries, mixed spice, salt and pepper in a small bowl.
4 Divide the dough into four equal pieces and roll into balls. Roll one of the balls out on a sheet of baking paper to form a thin 30cm x 20cm rectangle. Lightly brush with a little of the oil and sprinkle with a quarter of the almond meal mixture, leaving a 2cm border.
5 Starting from the long side, roll the dough up to form a long snake of dough. Cut in half and pinch ends to enclose then coil each piece into a spiral. Repeat the process with the remaining dough and almond meal mixture.
6 Roll out each of the spirals into circles of approximately 17cm in diameter.
7 Heat a large frying pan over medium heat with a little vegetable oil. Cook the flatbreads for 4-5 minutes on the first side, then for 2 minutes on the second side, or until golden brown. Serve the flatbreads warm with the Parmesan Mascarpone.
Flatbreads suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: You can make the flatbreads well ahead and freeze. Just before serving, place them onto an oven tray lined with baking paper, cover them with foil and heat in an oven at 180°C (160°C fan-forced) for 15 minutes or until thoroughly warmed through.



Ginger, lime and rum punch

Ginger, lime and rum punch

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 20 MINUTES

crushed ice, to serve
1 cup (200g) finely chopped fresh pineapple
3 peaches, sliced
¼ cup (60ml) lime juice
1 cup (250ml) dark rum, or to taste
4 cups (1 litre) ginger beer, chilled
2 cups (500ml) peach nectar, chilled
1 lime, sliced very finely
fresh mint, to serve

GINGER SYRUP

¼ cup (55g) finely grated fresh ginger
½ cup (110g) caster sugar
¼ cup (60ml) water

1 GINGER SYRUP: Combine the grated ginger, caster sugar and water in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil over high heat, then reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and strain the Ginger Syrup into a glass jar (discard the solids).

2 Half-fill a punch bowl with crushed ice. Add the remaining ingredients and the Ginger Syrup; stir to combine.

Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Red rice salad

SERVES 8-10 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR

1 cup (200g) red rice, rinsed well
½ cup (100g) mixed tri-colour quinoa, rinsed well
½ cup (70g) whole hazelnuts
2 tablespoons lemon juice
⅓ cup (80ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon honey
3 medium (450g) green apples, sliced very finely
⅔ cup (130g) dried figs, chopped
2 cups flat-leaf parsley leaves
150g goat's cheese, crumbled

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced).
2 Place rice in a saucepan with 3 cups (750ml) of water. Bring to the boil and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes or until just tender. Drain.
3 Meanwhile, place the quinoa into a small saucepan with 1 cup of water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes or until water has been absorbed. Cover, remove from the heat and allow to steam for 10 minutes.
4 Put the hazelnuts onto an oven tray and roast for 10 minutes or until lightly golden. Remove and transfer to a clean tea-towel. Using the tea-towel, rub away the skins of the hazelnuts. Cool and chop coarsely.
5 Put the lemon juice, olive oil and honey into a large bowl. Season to taste and whisk to combine. Add the apple and toss to combine. Add the rice, quinoa, hazelnuts, figs and parsley.
6 Arrange on a large serving platter. Top with the goat's cheese.

Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Asian vegetable salad

SERVES 8-10 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES

¼ (370g) cauliflower, sliced finely
1 medium (300g) fennel bulb, sliced finely
2 (240g) carrots, sliced finely
1 small (200g) red capsicum, sliced finely
1 (170g) telegraph cucumber, peeled, cut finely on the diagonal
1 large red chilli, sliced thinly
¼ cup loosely packed micro herbs
1 tablespoon black sesame seeds, toasted
2 tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted

MIRIN DRESSING

½ cup (125ml) mirin
2 tablespoons Japanese rice wine vinegar
3 teaspoons light soy sauce
1 tablespoon finely chopped pickled ginger

1 MIRIN DRESSING: Combine all the ingredients in a small screw-top jar. Shake to combine.
2 Put the cauliflower, fennel, carrot, red capsicum, telegraph cucumber and chilli into a large bowl. Pour over the dressing and toss to combine.
3 Arrange the vegetables on a serving platter and garnish with the micro herbs and mixed sesame seeds.

Not suitable to freeze.

Test Kitchen tip: We used a mandolin to slice the vegetables finely.



Asian vegetable salad and (top) Red rice salad


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The cherry, sugar, brandy and mustard glaze gives this ham a wonderful sweet-savoury tang.





Baked cherry ham with cherry and nectarine relish

Baked cherry ham with cherry and nectarine relish

SERVES 16 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES

680g jar morello cherries
½ cup (125ml) brandy
2 tablespoons brown sugar
8kg leg ham
⅓ cup (95g) hot English mustard
½ cup (110g) firmly packed brown sugar, extra

CHERRY AND NECTARINE RELISH

250g fresh cherries, pitted, halved
½ (85g) red onion, peeled, chopped finely
½ cup (110g) white sugar
⅔ cup (160ml) cider vinegar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 (680g) nectarines, chopped finely

1 Strain the bottled cherries over a small saucepan to catch the juice. Put the cherries into a medium saucepan.

2 Add the brandy and brown sugar to the strained cherry juice and bring to the boil. Boil until the mixture has reduced to about 100ml or until it has formed a rich glaze.

3 **CHERRY AND NECTARINE RELISH:** Add the fresh cherries, red onion, white sugar, vinegar and cinnamon to the saucepan with the bottled cherries. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes. Add the nectarines and cook for a further 20 minutes or until the mixture has reduced and thickened. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.

4 Preheat oven to 220°C (200°C fan-forced).

5 Cut through the rind of the ham about 12cm from the shank end of the leg. To remove the rind, run your thumb around the edge of the rind just under the skin. Start pulling the rind from the widest edge of the ham; continue to pull the rind carefully away from the fat up to the shank end. Remove the rind completely. Finely score the fat at 5mm intervals, cutting lightly just through the surface of the fat, but not through the meat.

6 Spread the mustard all over the ham, then sprinkle with extra sugar and press on lightly. Place the ham on a large wire rack in a large baking dish. Add 1-2 cups of water to the dish. Wrap the shank in foil. Bake, uncovered, for about 30 minutes or until the ham is browned. Reduce the oven temperature to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Remove the ham from the oven; brush the ham with some of the cherry glaze. Bake for a further 20-30 minutes or until well browned, brushing with the remaining glaze halfway through cooking.

7 Serve the ham with the Cherry and Nectarine Relish.

Sliced ham suitable to freeze. Glaze and cherry relish suitable to microwave.



Rosy peach and panettone trifle



Rosy peach and panettone trifle

SERVES 10 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR (+ SETTING TIME)

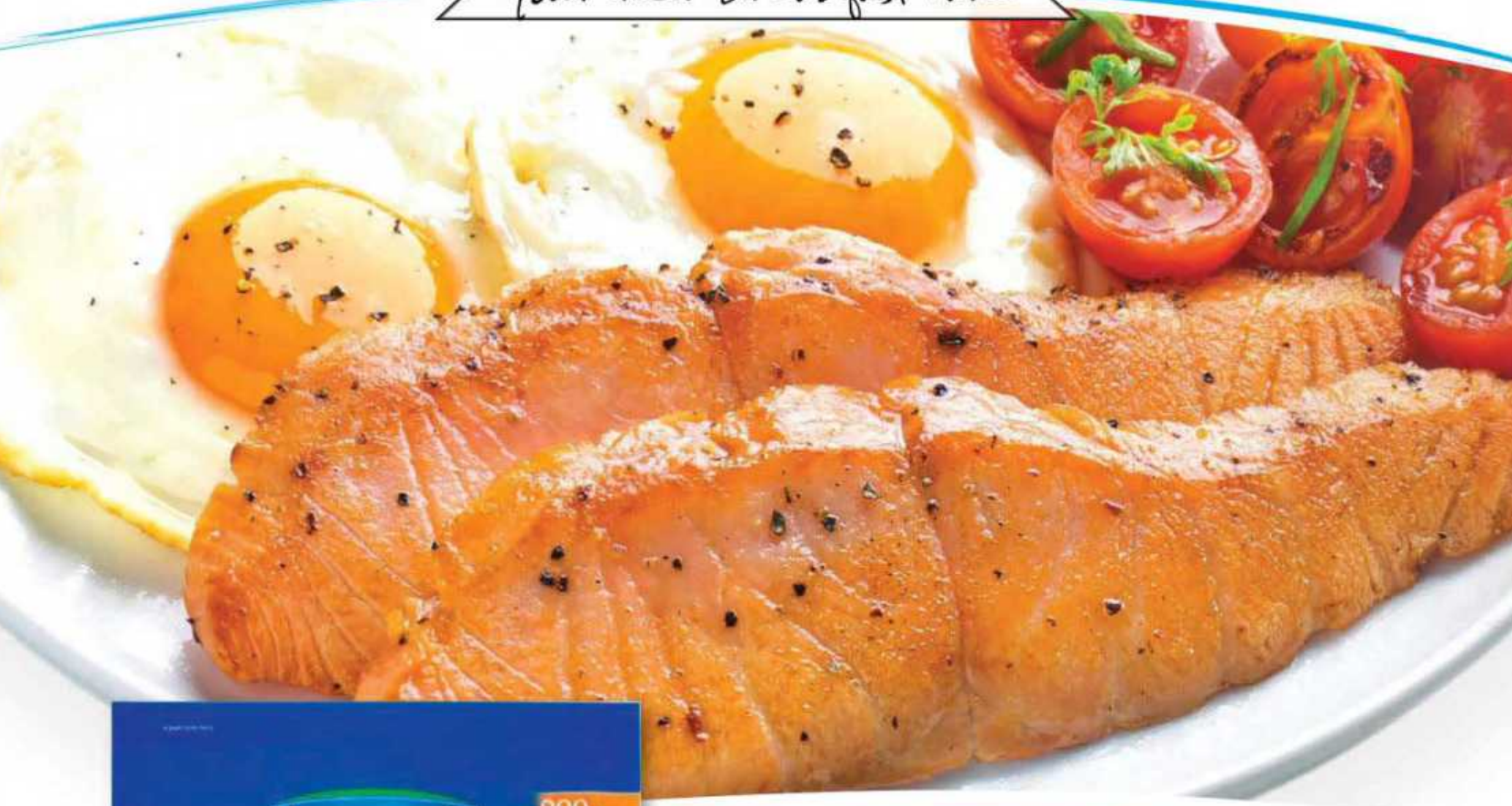
2 vanilla beans
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
1 teaspoon rosewater
6 (1kg) large peaches
1⅔ cups (400ml) cranberry juice, approximately
5 titanium (25g) gelatine leaves
4 eggs, separated
500g mascarpone
½ cup (125ml) coffee-flavoured liqueur
½ cup (110g) caster sugar, extra
½ cup (125ml) strong coffee
¼ cup (60ml) sweet Marsala wine
500g panettone
1⅓ cups (100g) flaked almonds, toasted
whipped cream, silver cachous and raspberries, to decorate

1 Rub the vanilla beans between your fingertips, then split them in half lengthways. Put them into a large saucepan. Add the sugar, rosewater and 1 litre (4 cups) of water. Bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Reduce the heat to a simmer.
2 Lightly score the peaches at the base along their natural groove. Lower the peaches into the simmering syrup (in batches if necessary) and cover with a piece of crumpled baking paper. Simmer for 5 minutes, rolling the peaches over halfway through the cooking if they are not completely covered by the syrup. Test if the fruit is ready by inserting a skewer into the flesh – it should give but not be too soft. Remove the peaches with a slotted spoon to a bowl. When cool, remove the skin from the peaches and cut them into thick wedges. Pour over ¼ cup (60ml) of the syrup. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until required.
3 To make the jelly, bring the remaining syrup to the boil and reduce by a third. Strain the syrup over a bowl; discard the vanilla beans. Return the syrup to the saucepan. Add the cranberry juice and heat until hot. Remove from heat.
4 Soak the gelatine leaves in a bowl of cold water until soft and pliable. Stir the gelatine into the hot cranberry syrup until dissolved. Pour into a 1-litre container and refrigerate for 4 hours or until set.
5 Whisk the egg whites in a small clean bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form.
6 Put the egg yolks, mascarpone, liqueur and extra sugar into a separate bowl and stir until combined. Lightly fold the egg whites into the mascarpone mixture.
7 Put the coffee and Marsala into a small bowl. Tear the panettone into bite-size pieces and dip the pieces into the coffee-Marsala mixture. In a 3.5-litre trifle dish, layer the panettone, mascarpone mixture, jelly, peaches and almonds. Top with a final layer of the mascarpone mixture.
8 Refrigerate until ready to serve. Top with dollops of whipped cream and decorate with the silver cachous and a scatter of raspberries
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

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Julie's family Christmas

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **STEVE BROWN**
STYLING BY **MICHELE CRANSTON**

WATCH OUR VIDEO
To see Julie setting her festive table, download the free ***viewa*** app (see Contents) and scan this page with your smartphone or tablet.

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY. JULIE WEARS LEONA EDMISTON DRESS AND ELK NECKLACE. CLOTH REINDEER FROM MYER.



Christmas Day at my place follows the Christmases I had as a child with roast turkey and all the trimmings. Wishing you and your loved ones a beautiful festive season together.

To see Julie make her amazing turkey, tune in to *Christmas With The Australian Women's Weekly* on December 6 at 8pm on the Nine Network.

Christmas turkey with apricot and almond stuffing
For recipe, see page 185.



Roast lemon herb potatoes and carrot cumin salad

For more traditional Christmas recipes, go to
FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU





Prosciutto-wrapped prawns

Roast lemon herb potatoes

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 10 MINUTES

2kg large sebago or Dutch cream potatoes, peeled, quartered
vegetable oil, to roast
1 lemon
½ bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped
½ bunch fresh chives, chopped finely
½ cup loosely packed fresh whole small basil leaves
2 teaspoons sea salt flakes, crushed lightly

1 Preheat oven to 220°C (200°C fan-forced). Place two shallow baking dishes in oven to preheat.
2 Place the potatoes in a large saucepan of cold, salted water; bring to the boil. Boil for about 20 minutes or until the edges are just starting to soften and a knife or skewer goes easily into the potato. Don't cook any further than this or the potatoes will fall apart. Drain the potatoes well and return pan to heat for 30 seconds to dry; it is critical they are dry.
3 Meanwhile, put about 3mm of oil into the two hot baking dishes. Place the dishes in the oven until the oil is hot. Carefully lower the potatoes into the hot oil. Gently turn potatoes to coat in oil. Roast for about 40 minutes, turning the potatoes once or twice, until they are crisp and golden brown.
4 Remove rind from lemon with a zester (or peel rind thinly avoiding the white pith; cut the rind into long thin strips). Combine rind, herbs and salt in a large bowl. Drain potatoes briefly on paper towel, then transfer to bowl. Toss lightly to combine.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Carrot cumin salad

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 15 MINUTES

1 tablespoon cumin seeds
1.5kg carrots, peeled, cut into 2cm pieces
¼ cup (70g) natural Greek-style yogurt
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 clove garlic, crushed
½ teaspoon sea salt flakes
½ cup loosely packed fresh coriander leaves

1 Toast the cumin seeds in a small dry frying pan over medium heat until fragrant. Crush lightly in a mortar and pestle (or use spice grinder or small food processor).
2 Cook the carrots in plenty of boiling salted water for 3-4 minutes or until tender; drain.
3 Meanwhile, combine yogurt, juice, garlic, cumin and salt in a large bowl. Add carrots, toss well. Serve sprinkled with coriander. This salad can be served warm or cooled.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Prosciutto-wrapped prawns

MAKES 16 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES

16 large (1kg) uncooked prawns
8 thin slices (120g) prosciutto, halved lengthways
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 lemons, cut into wedges

1 Shell and devein prawns, leaving tails intact.
2 Preheat a griddle plate or barbecue over high heat.
3 Meanwhile, wrap the prosciutto around the prawns. Use a skewer to secure. Brush prawns with oil; sprinkle with freshly ground pepper.
4 Grill or barbecue prawns over a high heat for about 2 minutes on each side, or until the prosciutto is browned and the prawns are just cooked through.
5 Serve prawns with lemon wedges.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Julie's tip: Prawns can be prepared eight hours ahead; keep covered in the fridge.

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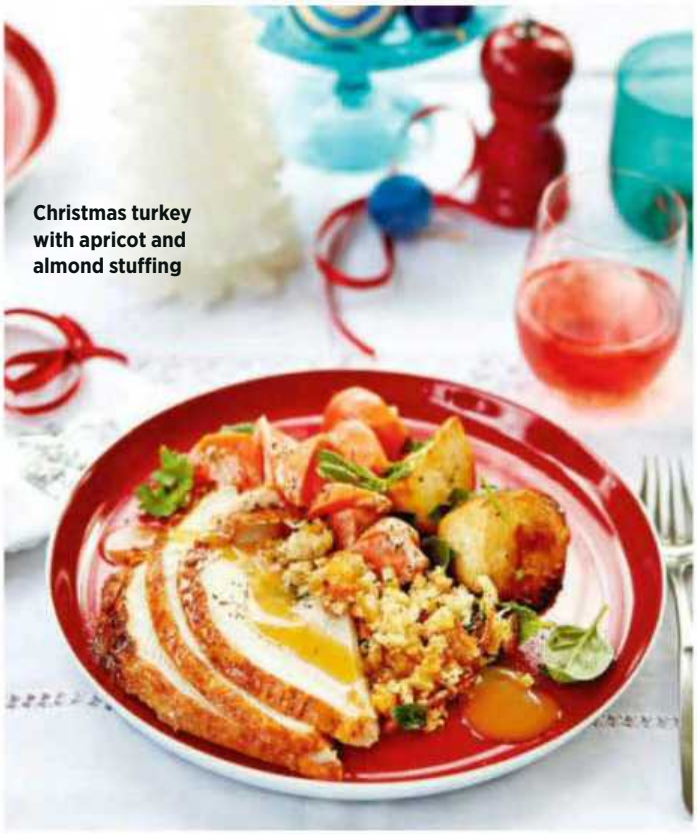


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Christmas turkey with apricot and almond stuffing

SERVES 12 PREP AND COOK TIME 3 HOURS 30 MINUTES (+ STANDING TIME)

The night before cooking your turkey, I recommend brining it. This causes some kind of wonderful chemical reaction, which keeps the breast beautifully moist. To brine the turkey, mix 2 cups salt and 4 cups of sugar in a tub of cold water, about 8 litres – large enough for the turkey to be submerged. Stir to dissolve the salt and sugar. Put the turkey into the tub. Chances are it won't fit in the fridge. My trick is to freeze water in small ice-cream or takeaway containers, allowing some space for expansion, to make giant ice cubes. The ice cubes take ages to defrost, but keeping them topped up is effectively keeping the turkey refrigerated. Remove the turkey from the water at least an hour before cooking; pat it dry inside and out, and allow it to come to room temperature.



Christmas turkey with apricot and almond stuffing

6kg (size 60) turkey
1 cup (250ml) chicken stock, approximately
mixed fresh herbs or watercress, to serve

APRICOT AND ALMOND STUFFING

6 (400g) middle rashers bacon, rind removed, cut into 5mm strips
4 medium (600g) brown onions, chopped
200g packet dried Mediterranean apricots, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
650g loaf three-day-old bread, crusts removed
⅔ cup (90g) slivered almonds, toasted
100g butter, melted, approximately

APRICOT SAUCE

¼ cup (35g) cornflour
2 cups (500ml) apricot nectar
2 cups (500ml) chicken stock
1 tablespoon brown sugar
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

1 Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
2 APRICOT AND ALMOND STUFFING: Cook the bacon in a large frying pan over medium heat, stirring, until golden brown. Add the onion; cook, stirring, until it is soft but not coloured. Add ½ cup water, apricots and thyme; cook, stirring, until the water evaporates. Transfer to a large bowl; cool slightly. Process the bread to a very coarse crumb, about the size of a fingernail. Add the breadcrumbs to the onion mixture with nuts; season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Add enough of the melted butter to bring the stuffing together.
3 Rinse the cavity of the turkey inside and out; pat dry with paper towel. Place some of the stuffing in the neck cavity; pull the skin down and secure with a skewer or toothpick. Loosely fill the main cavity with stuffing; tie legs together and tuck wings under body. Place the turkey into a large baking dish. Brush with a little melted butter. Roast turkey, uncovered, for 4 hours or until cooked when tested (see Julie's tip). As juices collect in the baking dish, spoon or brush them over the breast. Pour out excess juices and reserve if they are not browning towards the end of cooking time; the pan juices need to have some colour for a good sauce. If parts of the turkey start to colour too quickly, cover them with greased foil. Transfer the turkey to a large platter; cover with foil. Turkey can stand in a warm place while the potatoes are roasting. Reserve the baking dish and pan juices for sauce.



4 Meanwhile, pile the extra stuffing into a shallow ovenproof dish. Drizzle the stuffing with any remaining butter and a little of the reserved turkey pan juices. Bake stuffing on separate shelf with turkey for 30-40 minutes or until crunchy and golden.
5 APRICOT SAUCE: Place the baking dish with ½ cup of the turkey pan juices on the stove over a low heat. Add the cornflour and use a wooden spoon to stir through the juices, scraping up the baked-on brown bits. Start adding the apricot nectar, ¼ cup at a time, allowing the sauce to boil and thicken between additions. Add the stock in the same way. Stir in the sugar and vinegar; simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes or until the sauce has reduced to a syrupy consistency. Taste and add salt and ground white pepper, if needed.
6 Serve turkey with herbs, stuffing and Apricot Sauce.

Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Julie's tip: The turkey is cooked when it is golden brown, the legs are loose in their joints and the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted sideways into the thickest part of the thigh meat to the bone.



Chocolate trifle

Chocolate trifle

SERVES **10-12** PREP TIME **30 MINUTES (+ REFRIGERATION TIME)**

2 x 85g packets raspberry-flavoured jelly crystals
500g strawberries, sliced
¼ cup (55g) caster sugar
2 x 400g chocolate Swiss roll cakes, sliced 1cm thick
250g fresh raspberries
⅓ cup (80ml) hazelnut liqueur (Frangelico), or use strong, sweet coffee
3 cups (750ml) chocolate custard, either homemade or thick store-bought
300ml thickened cream
2 x 30g "Flake" chocolate bar

1 Make jellies following packet directions. Rinse a rectangular slice pan with cold water; pour out water. Pour jellies into pan. Cover, refrigerate for several hours or until set. Turn jelly out onto a board lined with baking paper. Cut jelly into cubes.
2 Place the strawberries in a shallow dish and scatter with sugar; stand for 10 minutes.
3 Place half the cake slices over the base and halfway up the side of a 3.5 litre (14-cup) serving bowl. Spoon one-third each of the strawberries and raspberries over cake. Sprinkle half the liqueur over the fruit and sponge. Lay half the jelly over the fruit then top with half the custard. Lay the remaining sponge slices on top of the custard and up the side of the dish. Top with half the remaining fruit, remaining liqueur, jelly and custard; cover. Refrigerate until serving.
4 Beat cream in a small bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Spoon the cream over the custard. Top with the remaining fruit and crumble the chocolate over the top. Serve nice and cold.
Not suitable to freeze.

White peach champagne punch

SERVES **8** MAKES ABOUT **1.75 LITRES (7 CUPS)**
PREP TIME **10 MINUTES (+ FREEZING TIME)**

2 cups (500ml) tropical fruit juice
1 cup (250ml) triple sec or peach liqueur
2 cups (500ml) lemonade, chilled
750ml bottle sparkling white wine, chilled





White peach champagne punch

3 medium (450g) white peaches, seeded, cut into wedges
½ cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves, crushed

1 Pour juice into ice cube trays; freeze.
2 Combine liqueur, lemonade and wine in a large jug; stir gently.
3 Divide ice cubes, peach wedges and mint between glasses. Top glasses up with the punch.
Juice suitable to freeze.

Julie's tip: The ice cubes can be frozen a week ahead. Make the punch just before serving to keep the bubbles.


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SMOKY PULLED PORK

Festive show-stoppers



Cherry and gingerbread ice-cream
For recipe, see page 196.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY TRIPLE TESTED TEST KITCHEN

Try our Test Kitchen's stunning desserts for a suitably sweet finale to your Christmas feast.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOHN PAUL URIZAR** STYLING BY **MICHAELA LE COMPTE**

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY. CHERRY AND GINGERBREAD ICE-CREAM: PHOTOGRAPHY BY BEN DEARNLEY; STYLING BY MICHELE CRANSTON.

Test Kitchen tip: This is quite an expensive cake to make, but we think it's worth it for a special celebration dessert. The coconut discs can be made two days ahead; store in airtight containers at room temperature in a cool, dry place.



Coconut and berry marscapone cake
For recipe, see page 196.

“Nothing says Christmas – or summer – like mango and the passionfruit adds a delicious tartness to this impressive dessert.”



Meringue-topped mango and passionfruit cake

Test Kitchen tip: It's best to assemble the cake just before serving. The cake layers can be made a day ahead; store in airtight containers in a single layer.

Panettone with sweet ricotta and cherry compote

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES

¼ cup (60ml) orange juice
1 cinnamon stick
3 cardamom pods, crushed
½ cup (110g) caster sugar
2 cups (500ml) water
500g fresh cherries, pitted
2½ cups (600g) ricotta cheese
2 tablespoons caster sugar, extra
500g panettone
icing sugar, to serve

1 Place the juice, spices, sugar and water in a medium saucepan; stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Add the cherries to the pan. Return to the boil; simmer for 2 minutes. Remove cherries with a slotted spoon and transfer to a heatproof bowl. Simmer the poaching liquid, uncovered, until reduced by half. Pour the syrup over the cherries; cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
2 Combine the ricotta and extra sugar in a medium bowl.
3 Slice the panettone into eight serving-size pieces; place pieces on an oven tray. Grill panettone until lightly golden.
4 Serve toasted panettone with the sweet ricotta and the cherry compote. Dust with a little sifted icing sugar.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: The cherry compote and sweet ricotta can be made a day ahead.



Panettone with sweet ricotta and cherry compote

Meringue-topped mango and passionfruit cake

SERVES 12 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES

180g butter, softened
1½ teaspoons vanilla bean paste
2⅔ cups (585g) caster sugar
3 eggs
¾ cup (165g) self-raising flour
¼ cup (35g) plain flour
½ cup (125ml) milk
6 egg whites
¾ teaspoon cream of tartar
1½ tablespoons flaked almonds
1½ teaspoons caster sugar, extra
2 medium (860g) mangoes
PASSIONFRUIT CREAM
450ml thickened cream
2 tablespoons icing sugar, sifted
⅓ cup (80ml) fresh passionfruit pulp

1 Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Grease and line three 20cm round springform cake pans.
2 Beat butter, vanilla and 1¼ cups (275g) of the caster sugar in a medium bowl with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in the whole eggs, one at a time. On low speed, add the combined sifted flours and milk, in two batches. Divide mixture evenly among prepared pans.
3 Beat egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining sugar, beating until thick and glossy.
4 Spread meringue over cake mixture in pans. In two pans, smooth the meringue flat: in the other pan, use the back of a spoon, to peak the meringue. Scatter with the flaked almonds and the extra sugar. Bake cakes for 30 minutes or until cooked when tested. Cool cakes in pans.
5 **PASSIONFRUIT CREAM:** Beat the cream and icing sugar in a medium bowl with an electrice mixer until soft peaks form. Stir in 2 tablespoons of passionfruit pulp.
6 Peel the mangoes, then slice away cheeks. Finely slice one of the cheeks and dice the remaining flesh.
7 Place a flat meringue-topped cake on a serving platter; spread with half of the Passionfruit Cream. Top with half the diced mango. Repeat with the other flat meringue-topped cake. Top with remaining cake and decorate with the sliced mango and remaining passionfruit pulp.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

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Espresso ice-cream wreath

SERVES 12 PREP AND COOK TIME 45 MINUTES (+ FREEZING TIME)

⅔ cup (50g) flaked almonds, toasted
¾ cup (165g) caster sugar
¼ cup (60ml) water
2 tablespoons instant coffee
¼ cup (60ml) boiling water
1½ tablespoons coffee liqueur
600ml thickened cream
2½ cups (400g) pure icing sugar, sifted
500g mascarpone
50g dark chocolate
12 firm, glossy unsprayed leaves from garden
30 store-bought chocolates, such as truffles, and unsprayed edible flowers, to decorate

BISCUIT BASE

250g chocolate chip biscuits
1 cup (100g) Maltesers
50g butter, melted
1 tablespoon milk

1 Grease a 24cm springform pan; line base and side with baking paper. Wrap a 9cm round ramekin (or other straight-sided round dish) with a double layer of plastic wrap; grease plastic and place in the centre of the pan.
2 Line a baking tray with baking paper. Scatter the toasted almonds over the tray. Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan and stir over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Brush down the inside of the saucepan with a pastry brush dipped in water to dissolve all the sugar crystals. Bring to the boil, without stirring; boil, uncovered, for 8-10 minutes or until a rich toffee colour. Quickly drizzle the toffee over the almonds. Tilt the tray a few times to ensure it spreads evenly. Cool the praline.
3 Combine the coffee and boiling water in a small jug. Stir to dissolve, then stir in the liqueur.
4 Coarsely chop the praline into small pieces or pulse in a food processor until finely chopped.
5 Beat the cream and icing sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Fold in the mascarpone and praline, then fold in the coffee mixture until just combined. Spoon into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Transfer to the freezer for 4 hours or until frozen.
6 BISCUIT BASE: Process the biscuits and Maltesers until coarse crumbs; add butter and milk, and process briefly to combine.
7 Remove frozen ice-cream wreath and press biscuit mixture over the top of the ice-cream to form a smooth surface. Return to freezer and freeze overnight.
8 Melt chocolate in microwave in 30-second bursts on 50% power, stirring between each burst. Paint melted chocolate onto underside of leaves, then refrigerate for 5 minutes. Paint a second layer on; refrigerated until chocolate is set. Carefully peel leaves away from chocolate.
9 To serve, remove the ramekin and release the side from the pan (if necessary, rub outside of cake pan with a hot damp cloth). Place inverted serving plate on top of ice-cream and turn over. Top with truffles, chocolate leaves and edible flowers.
Suitable to freeze. Chocolate suitable to microwave.



Espresso ice-cream wreath

To see *The Weekly* food team make this dessert, tune in to *Christmas With The Australian Women's Weekly* on December 6 at 8pm on the Nine Network.

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Bûche de Noël

SERVES 12 PREP AND COOK TIME 40 MINUTES (+ COOLING TIME)

5 eggs, separated
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup (110g) caster sugar
½ cup (50g) cocoa powder
¼ cup (35g) self-raising flour
1 tablespoon caster sugar, extra
120g fresh raspberries
cocoa powder and maraschino cherries, to serve

CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

3 egg whites, at room temperature
¾ cup (165g) caster sugar
200g butter, chopped, at room temperature
250g dark chocolate, melted, cooled slightly

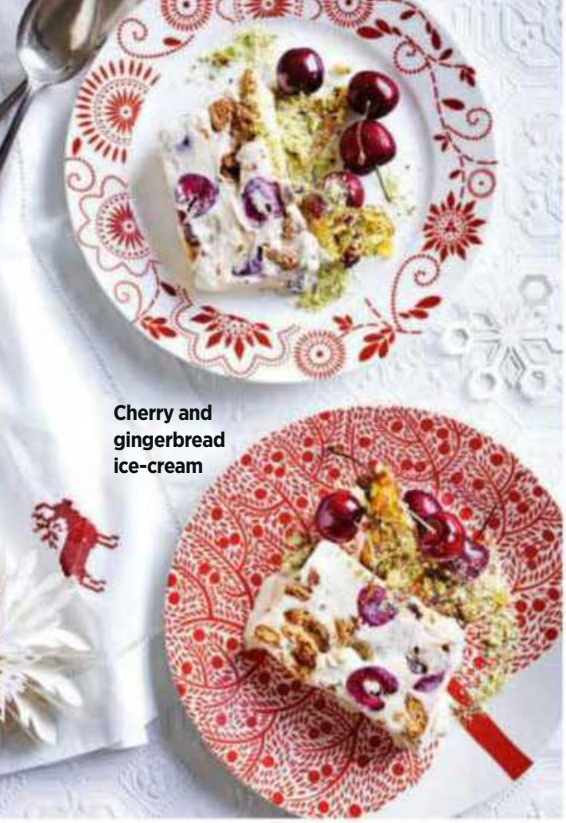
CHANTILLY CREAM

1 cup (250ml) cream
¼ cup (60g) icing sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract



Bûche de Noël

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Grease a 25cm x 38cm Swiss roll pan; line base with baking paper, extending paper 5cm over long sides.
2 Beat the egg yolks, extract and ¼ cup of the sugar in a small bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until thick and pale, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.
3 Beat egg whites in a clean small bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining sugar, beating until dissolved between additions. Fold egg white mixture into the egg yolk mixture. Sift cocoa and flour over egg mixture; fold in gently until just combined. Pour mixture into prepared pan; spread lightly. Bake for about 8 minutes or until cake springs back when touched lightly in the centre.
4 Just before the cake is cooked, place a barely damp clean tea towel on a clean bench. Top with a sheet of baking paper a little larger than the cake; if corners of baking paper curl up, weigh it down. Sprinkle the extra sugar over the paper. Turn out the cake onto the paper. Peel off the lining paper; cool for 1 minute. Roll up the cake from the long side in the paper; drape tea towel over roll. Cool on a wire rack.
5 CHOCOLATE BUTTER CREAM: Place the egg whites and sugar in a small heatproof bowl. Place the bowl over a small pan of simmering water. Whisk until the sugar dissolves and the egg whites are very warm to touch, about 70°C on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat. Beat egg white mixture with an electric mixer on high speed for 5 minutes. With the motor operating, add the butter, a piece or two at a time. Beat until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Beat in the melted chocolate.
6 CHANTILLY CREAM: Beat the cream, sugar and extract in a small bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form.
7 Carefully unroll the cooled cake and spread with Chantilly Cream, leaving a 2cm border on long side furthest from you; sprinkle with raspberries. Roll up. Slice one end of the cake at a sharp angle. Place the cake, seam-side down, on a serving platter. Attach the sliced end onto the cake to resemble a tree branch.
8 Spread a thin layer of the Chocolate Butter Cream over the cake, then place remaining butter cream in a piping bag fitted with a small fluted nozzle. Pipe a circular pattern on cut ends, then pipe lengthways along the cake, starting at the base, to resemble bark.
9 Dust log with a little extra sifted cocoa and decorate with maraschino cherries before serving.
Suitable to freeze. Chocolate suitable to microwave.



Cherry and gingerbread ice-cream

Cherry and gingerbread ice-cream

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 35 MINUTES (+ FREEZING TIME)

1 litre (4 cups) good-quality vanilla ice-cream, softened slightly
75g gingerbread biscuits, broken into small pieces
75g pistachio nougat, chopped finely
250g fresh cherries, pitted
⅓ cup (100g) fruit mince
fresh cherries, extra, to serve

PISTACHIO PRALINE

½ cup (70g) unsalted pistachios, chopped coarsely
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
¼ cup (60ml) water

1 Line an 11cm x 25cm loaf pan with freezer wrap or baking paper to cover base and sides, extending 5cm over the long sides.
2 Place the ice-cream in a large bowl; stir in gingerbread biscuits, nougat and cherries until just combined.
3 Firmly press half the ice-cream mixture into the prepared pan. Smooth the surface, then cover with the fruit mince.
4 Top with the remaining ice-cream mixture, pressing firmly; smooth the top. Fold the overhanging paper over the top. Freeze overnight or until firm.
5 **PISTACHIO PRALINE:** Line a large oven tray with baking paper. Sprinkle pistachios over the baking paper. Combine the sugar and the water in a small saucepan; stir over medium heat, without boiling, until sugar is dissolved. Bring to the boil; boil, uncovered, without stirring, until the toffee turns a dark golden brown. Pour the hot toffee over the pistachios and tilt the tray to ensure they are uniformly covered. Stand for about 30 minutes or until cooled and set. Break half the praline into rough shards and store in a small airtight container in a cool, dry place – not in the refrigerator. Finely chop the remaining praline. Store in a separate small airtight container.
6 To serve, turn out on a chilled serving plate. Top with the Pistachio Praline and extra fresh cherries. Serve in thick slices.
Suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Don't soften ice-cream too much or it will lose volume and texture. Remove ice-cream from tub with a large spoon and chop a little before stirring or tossing ingredients through. Terrine and praline can be made up to a week ahead.



Coconut and berry mascarpone cake

Coconut and berry mascarpone cake

SERVES 12 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES (+ COOLING AND REFRIGERATION TIME)

10 egg whites
¾ cup (165g) caster sugar
1¾ cups (280g) pure icing sugar
½ cup (60g) almond meal (ground almonds)
1½ cups (120g) desiccated coconut
1½ cups (120g) shredded coconut
500g small strawberries, halved lengthways
500g raspberries
pure icing sugar, extra, to serve

MASCARPONE FILLING

3 eggs
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind
⅔ cup (150g) caster sugar
750g mascarpone

1 Preheat the oven to 150°C (130°C fan-forced). Grease three large oven trays. Mark a 26cm circle on three sheets of baking paper, then turn over and place on the greased trays.
2 Beat the egg whites in the large bowl of an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Gradually add caster sugar, beating until dissolved between additions. Gently fold in the sifted icing sugar, then the almond meal and coconuts.
3 Divide mixture evenly between three trays and spread within the marked circles. Smooth tops. Bake for about 1½ hours or until dry to touch. Cool in the oven with the door ajar.
4 **MASCARPONE FILLING:** Beat the egg, lemon rind and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer until pale and thick. Gradually fold in the mascarpone until just combined.
5 Reserve 24 small, even-sized strawberry halves. Gently fold remaining strawberries into Mascarpone Filling.
6 Gently invert each coconut disc and remove the baking paper. Place a coconut disc on a large serving plate. Use the removable base of a flan tin to help move the discs. Cover the disc with half the Mascarpone Filling and spread almost to the edge. Arrange 12 strawberry halves around the edge; top with the second disc. Press gently but firmly. Top with the remaining Mascarpone Filling; arrange remaining halved strawberries around the outside, then position the last disc. Cover and refrigerate for several hours before serving.
7 To serve the cake, top with the raspberries and dust lightly with the extra sifted icing sugar.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.



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*Product contains other sweeteners.

Poh's festive TABLE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BRETT STEVENS**
STYLING BY **KRISTEN WILSON**



AS CHINESE Malaysian migrants, my family adopted Christmas, so our concept of it is untraditional. Growing up, my memories of it are kind of hilarious – a terrific clash of cultures with the Nyonya curry chicken sitting next to the ham and the leftover meat and bones going into Boxing Day rice congee. I'd like to think the cringe I felt in my youth is now replaced by a gratitude for difference because when I look back at those chaotic Christmas buffets, they in retrospect inform me of who I am – a proud Chinese Australian.

Wishing you all great tidings of comfort and joy, xxx

Prawn wontons with green apple chilli dipping sauce
For recipe, see page 205.

WATCH OUR VIDEO
To see Poh talk about her delicious recipes, download the free ***viewa*** app and scan this page with your smartphone or tablet.

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY. TABLE RUNNER IN MARIMEKKO FABRIC SIIRTOLAPUUTARHA COTTON COL.133, SELETTI AGLAURA GLASS TUMBLERS, ISAURA DINNER PLATES, DIOMIRA PLATTER AND RAISSA CAKE STAND USED THROUGHOUT, ALL FROM CHEE SOON & FITZGERALD, CHEESOONFITZGERALD.COM. POH WEARS DINOSAUR DESIGNS JEWELLERY.



Kingfish carpaccio and apple with orange ginger dressing

Scallop and shiitake custards

SERVES 6 PREP AND COOK TIME 40 MINUTES (+ STANDING TIME)

4 (20g) dried shiitake mushrooms
8 large (170g) scallops, cut into three slices each
2 teaspoons shao hsing rice wine
½ teaspoon caster sugar
1 teaspoon soy sauce
4 free-range eggs
1¼ cups (310ml) chicken stock or water
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 green onion (green shallot), sliced finely
2 tablespoons light soy sauce

1 Place shiitake in a small heatproof bowl; cover with boiling water and stand for 20 minutes, or until softened. Discard the woody stems of the shiitake and slice the mushrooms thinly.
2 Combine the scallops, shao hsing, a pinch ground white pepper, sugar and soy sauce in a small bowl; marinate for 10 minutes.
3 Layer the sliced shiitake and scallops alternately in six ½ cup (125ml) heatproof bowls or ramekins.
4 Place a large bamboo steamer over a wok with sufficient water over medium heat until water is steaming, but not boiling.
5 Very lightly whisk eggs and stock with a fork in a large bowl; season with a pinch salt and ground white pepper. Strain egg mixture into a jug and pour over scallop mixture in dishes. Place dishes in bamboo steamer, cover, steam custards gently for 20 minutes or until just set; remove from heat.
6 Heat combined oils in a small saucepan until just smoking. Remove from heat; add onion to pan, then add soy sauce. Spoon oil mixture over custards before serving.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.



Scallop and shiitake custards

Kingfish carpaccio and apple with orange ginger dressing

SERVES 4-6 AS A STARTER PREP TIME 30 MINUTES

1 medium (150g) Pink Lady apple
1 tablespoon lemon juice
360g sashimi-quality kingfish or tuna, sliced 2mm-3mm thick across the grain
1 teaspoon sea salt flakes or to taste (I love black sea salt because you can see where you've seasoned)
½ (65g) Lebanese cucumber, seeded, cut into 5mm cubes
1 red shallot, chopped finely
small chervil sprigs
coriander and red vein sorrel micro herbs
¼ teaspoon freshly ground Sichuan pepper

ORANGE GINGER DRESSING

¼ cup (60ml) grapeseed oil
1 teaspoon finely grated orange rind
⅓ cup (80ml) fresh orange juice (or red grapefruit or mandarin)
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon light soy sauce
1 teaspoon fish sauce
¼ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
¼ teaspoon finely chopped fresh garlic

1 Peel, core and quarter apple; slice into 1mm-2mm thick slices. Pour lemon juice over the sliced apple in a small bowl and toss lightly to prevent them from oxidising. Drain apples if there is a lot of excess liquid, then divide into four portions and arrange them in a concentric pattern on serving plates. Alternatively, arrange on one or two large serving plates for sharing.
2 Divide kingfish pieces between plates and lay each piece flat, over the bed of apple, following the concentric pattern, slightly overlapping.
3 **ORANGE GINGER DRESSING:** Shake all the dressing ingredients in a clean glass jar.
4 Spoon the Orange Ginger Dressing over the fish, making sure the surface is glossy and thoroughly covered. Season carefully with crushed sea salt flakes and sprinkle cucumber, shallot, herbs and pepper evenly over the surface of the fish. Serve immediately.
Not suitable to freeze.

Poh's tip: Black sea salt is available from some large supermarkets and selected delicatessens.

KINGFISH CARPACCIO AND APPLE WITH ORANGE GINGER DRESSING RECIPE FROM *SAME, SAME BUT DIFFERENT* BY POH, PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS.
SCALLOP AND SHIITAKE CUSTARDS RECIPE FROM *POH'S KITCHEN – MY COOKING ADVENTURES* BY POH, PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS.

A sparkling Christmas welcome

Christmas is here which means getting together with family and friends to celebrate the season. Do it in style with a summery Welcome Drink that's simple to prepare, like this fruity Vodka and Watermelon Punch, perfect for a crowd.



VODKA AND WATERMELON PUNCH

Serves 8

240ml **Smirnoff Vodka**
600g of chopped watermelon plus 8 extra wedges to serve
8 leaves of basil
120ml lime cordial
Ice
Soda water

1. Muddle watermelon pieces in bottom of a large jug
2. Add Smirnoff Vodka, basil leaves, lime cordial, ice and stir
3. Top with soda water and stir once more
4. Garnish each glass with a watermelon wedge

Contains 1 standard drink per serve

Tips for entertaining

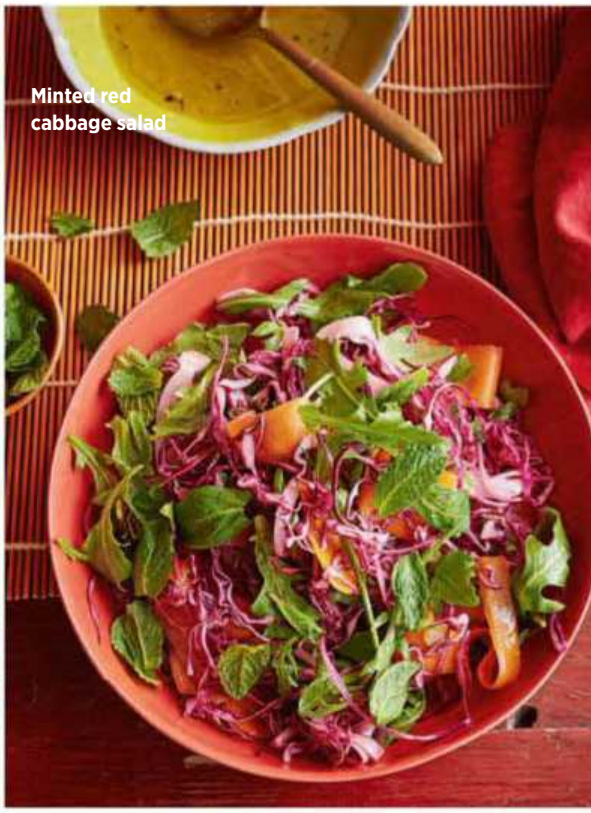
- Chop the watermelon and cut the small wedges ahead of time, then keep an extra supply in the fridge if your guests ask for seconds of your delicious Welcome Drink
- Make your table setting extra special by adding simple decorations in matching colours. Try scattering red and white straws and curly silver ribbons along the center

Make your next gathering a little more special. Share your creations with #MadeInHouse

Get the facts DRINKWISE.ORG.AU



Mahogany-glazed pork belly



Minted red cabbage salad

For more exciting recipes for entertaining, go to FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU

Mahogany-glazed pork belly

SERVES 5-6 AS PART OF A BANQUET
PREP AND COOK TIME 2 HOURS

1kg boneless pork belly
2 tablespoons rice bran or vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled, chopped finely
5cm piece fresh ginger, unpeeled, chopped coarsely
4 green onions (green shallots), chopped into 1cm pieces
½ cup (110g) caster sugar
¼ cup (60ml) dark soy sauce
¼ cup (60ml) light soy sauce
1 teaspoon red food colouring
⅔ cup (160ml) shao hsing rice wine
1 cinnamon stick, broken into small pieces
2 star anise
4 whole cloves
4 strips orange rind
coriander leaves, to serve

1 Place the pork in a large saucepan. Cover the pork with water; bring to the boil and simmer gently, covered, over medium heat for 30-40 minutes or until cooked through. Remove from liquid; cut pork into 3cm square pillars. Keep simmering the pork liquid, uncovered, until reduced by half.
2 Meanwhile, in a small frying pan, cook the oil, garlic, ginger and onion over medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until fragrant and golden. Add onion mixture to the pork liquid with remaining ingredients, except coriander; return the pork to the pan. Simmer, uncovered, for about 50 minutes or until the lean parts of the meat split easily when squeezed gently. Remove pork from pan; cover to keep warm.
3 Skim fat from liquid. Strain liquid into a bowl; return to pan. Boil, uncovered, until thick and syrupy.
4 To serve, arrange the pork pillars attractively in a wide shallow dish, then pour the sauce over the top so each piece is coated in a lovely gloss. Sprinkle with coriander. Serve with Minted Red Cabbage Salad (recipe below).
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Minted red cabbage salad

SERVES 6 PREP TIME 10 MINUTES

¼ large (500g) red cabbage
2 medium (240g) carrots
100g baby rocket
good handful small whole mint leaves
3 green onions (green shallots), sliced finely
DRESSING
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons white balsamic condiment
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 Remove core from cabbage; shred as finely as possible (with a mandolin is best). Peel carrots, then peel into ribbons lengthways.
2 Combine the cabbage, carrot, rocket, mint and onion in a large salad bowl.
3 **DRESSING:** Shake the juice, balsamic and oil in a clean glass jar; season to taste.
4 Just before serving, toss the salad with the Dressing in a large bowl with clean hands to avoid bruising the leaves.
Not suitable to freeze.

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Lime and lychee cocktail

MAKES 6 PREP TIME 5 MINUTES

2 limes, quartered
12 sprigs mint, leaves stripped
¼ cup (60ml) Amaretto
¼ cup (60ml) Paraiso lychee liqueur
1 cup (250ml) lychee juice (see Poh's tip)
2 cups ice cubes
1 cup (250ml) chilled soda water
6 fresh or canned lychees
extra ice cubes and mint sprigs, to serve

1 Squeeze 4 lime wedges into a cocktail shaker, then throw in the skins. Add 4 sprigs of the mint and half each of the Amaretto, Paraiso, lychee juice and ice; shake well.
2 Strain the mixture into three cocktail glasses; top up with half the soda water. Garnish with fresh lychees, extra ice and mint sprigs.
3 Repeat with remaining ingredients to make a total of 6 cocktails. Serve immediately.
Not suitable to freeze.

Poh's tip: Lychee juice is available from Asian food stores and some greengrocers.



Lime and lychee cocktail

Prawn wontons with green apple chilli dipping sauce

SERVES 6 AS A STARTER (MAKES ABOUT 25) PREP AND COOK TIME 45 MINUTES (+ SOAKING TIME)

½ x 250g packet wonton wrappers (yellow square ones)
rice bran or vegetable oil, to deep-fry
DIPPING SAUCE
1 large (200g) green apple, cored, chopped
1 long green chilli, chopped coarsely
handful fresh coriander leaves
1 clove garlic, peeled
¼ cup (60ml) white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon caster sugar
FILLING
700g uncooked king prawns (see Poh's tips)
1 teaspoon cornflour
2-3 teaspoons finely chopped fresh ginger
1 green onion (green shallot), chopped
1 tablespoon shao hsing wine
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon soy sauce
½ teaspoon caster sugar
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper

1 DIPPING SAUCE: Blitz all the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl; cover and refrigerate.
2 FILLING: Shell and devein prawns. You will need 350g prawn meat. Pulse the prawns in a food processor very briefly – the prawns should be roughly chopped, *not* a smooth paste. Tip the mixture into a medium bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and mix with a spoon until combined.
3 Top each wonton wrapper with a heaped teaspoon of the Filling. Brush edges with a little water, then fold diagonally in half; seal. If you want, you can push a crease into the centre of the bottom of the purse and bring the two corners together, sealing with a little water to form a little parcel.
4 To cook wontons, heat oil in a small saucepan over a low to medium heat, about 160°C, or until a plain wrapper fries to a golden brown in 10-15 seconds. Fry wontons in batches of five for about 3-5 minutes or until crispy, deep golden and cooked through. Remove from oil using a slotted spoon; drain in a large sieve lined with paper towel.
5 Serve wontons immediately with the Dipping Sauce.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Poh's tips:

* For a pork and prawn variation, shell and devein 350g uncooked king prawns – you will need 180g prawn meat and 180g lean pork mince.
* For a long-lasting crunchy result, deep-frying is best done over a medium heat. If the oil is too hot, the skin will burn by the time the filling is cooked. Also, the heat won't penetrate the skin properly, which means the wonton browns fast, but will turn soggy and wilt just as quickly.



Hazelnut and fresh fruit torte



Hazelnut and fresh fruit torte

SERVES 8-10 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES (+ COOLING TIME)

6 large egg whites, at room temperature
1⅓ cups (300g) caster sugar
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar or cider vinegar
1½ cups (150g) hazelnut meal
3 medium (600g) bananas, sliced 5mm thick
250g strawberries, 6 reserved whole to serve, remaining sliced 5mm thick
4 kiwifruit, peeled, sliced 5mm thick

GANACHE

⅓ cup (80ml) cream
80g dark chocolate, chopped

FILLING

600ml thickened cream
⅓ cup (55g) icing sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or natural vanilla extract

1 Preheat the oven to 150°C (130°C fan-forced). Draw 20cm circles on three sheets of baking paper. Place the paper upside down on the trays.

2 Beat egg whites in a large, clean bowl (preferably stainless steel or glass) with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Keep beating, gradually adding 1 tablespoon of sugar at a time. Beat until all the sugar is incorporated and dissolved, and you have a meringue with stiff peaks. Sprinkle over the vinegar and hazelnut meal, and gently fold into the meringue. Divide the mixture between the three circles; spread inside the circles. Bake for 1 hour or until dry to touch. Cool in oven with door ajar.

3 GANACHE: Heat the cream in a small saucepan until hot but not boiling. Place chocolate in a heatproof bowl; pour cream over chocolate. Stir with a metal or silicone spoon until all the chocolate has melted and the mixture is smooth. Pour chocolate mixture into a small paper piping bag; twist the top and set aside.

4 FILLING: In a medium bowl, beat cream, icing sugar and vanilla until firm peaks form.

5 Begin to assemble torte by placing one of the meringue discs onto a serving plate or cake stand. Spread with one-third of the Filling and then place one-third of the various sliced fruits on top, fanning them out nicely to distribute the colour and flavours evenly. Grab your icing bag of Ganache and snip off a 2mm tip. Squeeze a long zig-zag pattern that goes right across the cake from one end to the other and make sure you leave enough for the remaining layers. Repeat with remaining ingredients, including reserved whole strawberries.

6 Serve chilled, but make sure you serve within 1-2 hours or the banana will brown.

Not suitable to freeze. Ganache suitable to microwave.

Poh's tip: You may prep the hazelnut meringue discs a few days before serving and store in an airtight container at room temperature. You can brush the banana with lemon juice to prevent browning.

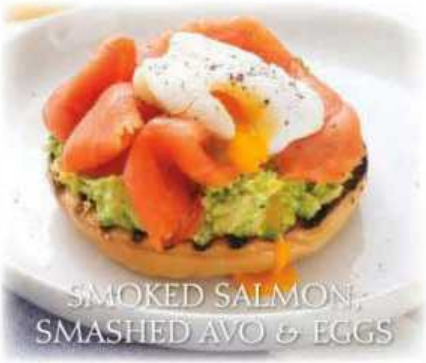
HAZELNUT AND FRESH FRUIT TORTE RECIPE FROM *SAME, SAME BUT DIFFERENT* BY POH, PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS. PLYWOOD TREE FROM PULP CREATIVE PAPER, PULPCREATIVEPAPER.COM.AU.

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Roast turkey with bacon, onion and sage stuffing

Christmas is all about the classics – just add your own twist! Here, we share a roast turkey, prawn cocktail and **Chocolate and Cherry Bombe Alaska – the ultimate wow-factor finale.**

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ROAST TURKEY WITH BACON, ONION AND SAGE STUFFING

SERVES 10-12 PREP AND COOK TIME 4 HOURS 15 MINUTES

5kg Woolworths Fresh Whole Turkey
50g butter, melted
1 litre salt-reduced chicken stock
⅓ cup plain flour

ONION AND SAGE STUFFING

60g butter
4 bacon rashers, chopped
1 medium brown onion, chopped
2 trimmed celery sticks, chopped
1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage leaves
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
4 cups fresh breadcrumbs
1 egg, beaten lightly

1 ONION AND SAGE STUFFING: Heat butter in a large frying pan; add the bacon, onion and celery. Cook, stirring over medium heat until onion has softened and bacon is browned lightly. Combine the onion mixture, herbs, breadcrumbs and egg in a large bowl; mix well.
2 Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
3 Discard the neck from the turkey. Rinse the turkey under running cold water. Pat dry inside and out with absorbent paper. Fill the turkey cavities with Onion and Sage Stuffing. Tie the legs of the turkey together with kitchen string; tuck the wings under. Place the turkey on an oiled rack in a large flameproof baking dish. Brush the turkey all over with half the melted butter; sprinkle with sea salt flakes. Pour 2 cups of the stock into the dish.
4 Cover the baking dish tightly with two layers of greased foil. Roast the turkey for 2 hours. Remove foil; brush with remaining butter.
5 Roast the turkey, uncovered, for a further 1 hour 30 minutes or until browned and cooked through. Add water to the dish during cooking to prevent the juices burning, if necessary. Remove the turkey from the dish; cover with foil. Stand in a warm place for 15 minutes before carving.
6 Meanwhile, pour the juices from the baking dish into a jug; stand for a few minutes or until the fat has risen to the surface. Skim off the fat and return 2 tablespoons to the baking dish; discard remaining fat. Top up the pan juices with remaining chicken stock and water to 3 cups. Place the baking dish over medium heat; add the flour. Cook, stirring, until well browned. Gradually whisk in the reserved pan juice mixture; cook, stirring, until the mixture boils and thickens. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Strain gravy into a heatproof jug.
7 Serve the turkey with gravy, roast potatoes, pumpkin and steamed green vegetables.

Tips: Make the turkey stuffing the day before and store in the refrigerator until ready to use. If using a frozen turkey, allow 3 days to thaw in the refrigerator.

PRAWN ZUCCHINI AND MINT SALAD

SERVES 12 PREP TIME 25 MINUTES (+ STANDING TIME)

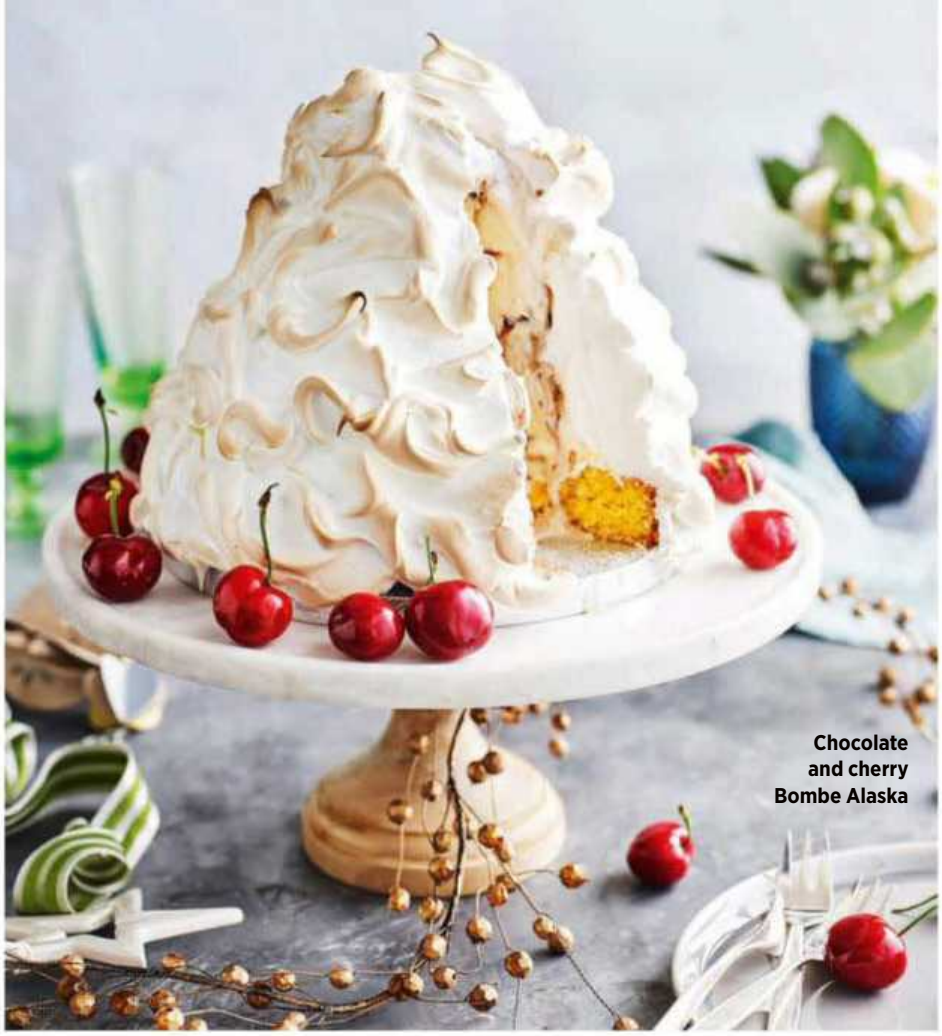
⅔ cup fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
⅓ cup Australian extra virgin olive oil
4 small zucchini, cut into ribbons
6 radishes, trimmed, sliced thinly
2 baby cos lettuce, trimmed, inner leaves torn
½ cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
2 large avocado, cut into small wedges
36 cooked Australian tiger prawns, shelled, deveined, tails left on

1 Combine juice, vinegar and oil in a medium bowl. Add zucchini; turn to coat in dressing. Stand zucchini mixture for 20 minutes. Add the radish, lettuce and mint; toss gently to combine. Season to taste.
2 Divide zucchini salad and avocado between 12 serving glasses. Top with prawns and drizzle with any remaining dressing.

Tip: Cut the zucchini into ribbons using a vegetable peeler, V-slicer or mandolin.



Prawn zucchini and mint salad



Chocolate and cherry Bombe Alaska

CHOCOLATE AND CHERRY BOMBE ALASKA

SERVES 10-12 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES (+OVERNIGHT FREEZING TIME)

1 litre Woolworths Select Vanilla Ice-Cream
415g can Woolworths Select Black Stoneless Cherries In Syrup, well-drained, or 1 cup pitted fresh cherries, halved
½ cup dark chocolate dessert sauce
100g butter, softened
6 free-range eggs, separated
1¾ cups caster sugar
⅔ cup self-raising flour
¼ cup almond meal (ground almonds)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
Fresh cherries, for serving

1 Stand ice-cream at room temperature until softened slightly. Spoon ice-cream into a large bowl; stir in cherries and swirl in chocolate sauce. Return ice-cream to tub. Cover; freeze overnight or until firm (any leftover ice-cream mixture can be frozen in a smaller container for another use).
2 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Grease and line base and side of 20cm cake pan.
3 Combine butter, egg yolks, ½ cup sugar, flour, almond meal and vanilla in a medium bowl. Beat with an electric mixer until smooth and combined. Spread mixture into prepared pan. Bake for about 25 minutes.
4 Transfer cake to a cake board or ovenproof serving plate and place on a baking tray.
5 Using scissors, cut the sides of the ice-cream tub away. Invert the ice-cream into the centre of the cake and return to the freezer.
6 Preheat oven to 250°C (250°C fan-forced). Place the oven rack on the bottom shelf.
7 Add remaining 1¼ cups sugar, egg whites and cream of tartar to a large bowl of an electric mixer; beat on high speed for about 8 minutes or until meringue is thick and glossy. Working quickly, spread meringue over the ice-cream and the cake to cover completely. Bake for about 3 minutes or until meringue is browned lightly. Serve with fresh cherries.

FAMOUS BOMBE ALASKA
To watch Fran make this dessert, scan this page with the free ***viewa*** app and discover other recipes that could make you famous this Christmas.

Fresh Market UPDATE

Your guide to what's fresh this month.



BERRY DELICIOUS

Sweet and juicy, blackberries vary in colour from a true black to a dark glossy purple-red colour. Look for berries that are firm, plump and glossy, with an even colour. Store berries in the fridge, unwashed, on paper towel and covered with plastic wrap. Use within 1-2 days of purchasing.

IN-SEASON – CHERRIES

A must-have at the Christmas table, cherries are one of the favourite stone fruits for the festive season. Choose shiny and plump cherries with green stems attached. Generally, the darker the colour, the sweeter the fruit will be. Store unwashed cherries in a container in the fridge for up to 3 days and wash just before use.



Woolworths
The fresh food people
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Cake of the month

BEST-EVER GINGER CAKE

This ginger cake is one of our all-time favourites. It's beautifully moist, has the perfect amount of spice and will make your home smell like Christmas.

Ginger cake

SERVES 10 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES

185g butter
½ cup (175g) golden syrup
½ cup (180g) treacle
¾ cup (165g) brown sugar
3 eggs
1 cup (250ml) milk
1 cup (150g) self-raising flour
1½ cups (225g) plain flour
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon allspice
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
¼ cup (55g) crystallised ginger, chopped finely
maraschino cherries, to serve

LEMON ICING
1 cup (160g) icing sugar
1½ tablespoons lemon juice, approximately

1 Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Grease a deep 24cm (2.5 litre/10-cup capacity) fancy Bundt cake pan with a pastry brush dipped in a little soft butter.
2 Combine the butter, golden syrup, treacle and sugar in a medium saucepan and heat gently until melted.
3 Whisk the eggs with milk in a jug to combine.
4 Put the flours and spices into a large bowl. Stir in the butter mixture, followed by the egg mixture, then the crystallised ginger. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and bake for 1 hour or until cooked when tested. Stand cake in the pan for 10 minutes before turning onto a wire rack to cool.
5 LEMON ICING: Combine the sifted icing sugar and the lemon juice in a small bowl until smooth.
6 Drizzle the Lemon Icing over the cake and serve topped with maraschino cherries.
Uniced cake suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

For delicious cake recipes, go to
FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEAN PAUL URIZAR. STYLING BY MICHAELA LE COMPTE. FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY.

Jamie's Cherry Cheesecake Semifreddo

The fresh food people

Make your Christmas Famous with New Season Cherries

From Woolworths



Pick up Jamie Oliver's recipe today in store or online.

Woolworths
The fresh food people

Deborah Hutton's OPEN HOUSE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BEN DEARNLEY**
STYLING BY **KRISTEN WILSON**



Deborah Hutton shares her favourite recipes and tips on how to host a fabulous cocktail party.





ENTERTAINING AT home allows us to connect with friends and family on a more intimate level and also welcome new friends. It's a great way to share experiences, let your guard down and relax over a glass of champagne. Having a gathering is all about good food and wine, good friends and good fun. The goal of successful entertaining isn't so much about impressing people, but putting them at ease and having a few laughs. Cocktail parties are a great way to have more people over at once for some seriously good fun. I love creating an interesting mix of guests and just letting the conversation and drinks flow.

✻ SETTING THE SCENE

Festive must-haves start with the tree and sparkling decorations. I like to celebrate the festive season with alfresco gatherings. Track down some cool Christmas lounge music and consider doing a Kris Kringle gift exchange.

✻ DRINKS ESSENTIALS

Consider welcoming guests with a refreshing cocktail in a beautiful glass. Champagne and sparkling wines should be served cold, so make sure they are well chilled before serving. Arrival drinks don't have to match the food. Remember that some guests may prefer non-alcoholic drinks, so stock up on sparkling mineral water, soft drinks and jugs of water with slices of fresh lemon and lime.

✻ PARTY FOOD

I like to offer bite-sized delicacies when guests arrive. Hand them around as you introduce people and keep the conversation moving. ➤



Above, left: Rhubarb and elderflower mojito. Below: Spinach and ginger dumplings with spicy dressing
For recipes, see page 220.

Serve It

Toast the Christmas season with family and friends with one of these easy-to-prepare welcome drink ideas. Each comes with its perfect match in moreish finger food.



CLASSIC PIMM'S

Fill your jug with ice, then add cucumber, orange and mint. Pour in 180ml **PIMM'S**. Top with equal parts of dry ginger ale and lemonade. Serves 4. *Contains 1 standard drink per serve.* Top each glass with a dash of sparkling wine to create a delicious PIMM'S Spritz.

PAIR WITH Prawn and chorizo skewers, fresh oysters and good-quality potato chips.



PASSIONFRUIT & LIME COOLER

In a tall glass, mix the juice of half a lime with a teaspoon of sugar. Scoop in the pulp of a passionfruit and fill the glass with crushed ice. Pour in 30ml **Smirnoff Vodka**, top with soda water and stir well. *Contains 1 standard drink.*

PAIR WITH Salt and pepper calamari, and coconut prawns.



ELDERFLOWER COOLER

Pour 30ml **Gordon's London Dry Gin** over ice in a tall glass. Add 20ml of elderflower cordial, one mint sprig and two cucumber slices. Top with soda water and stir well. *Contains 1 standard drink.*

PAIR WITH Roast beetroot with fetta and spiced lamb skewers with yogurt.

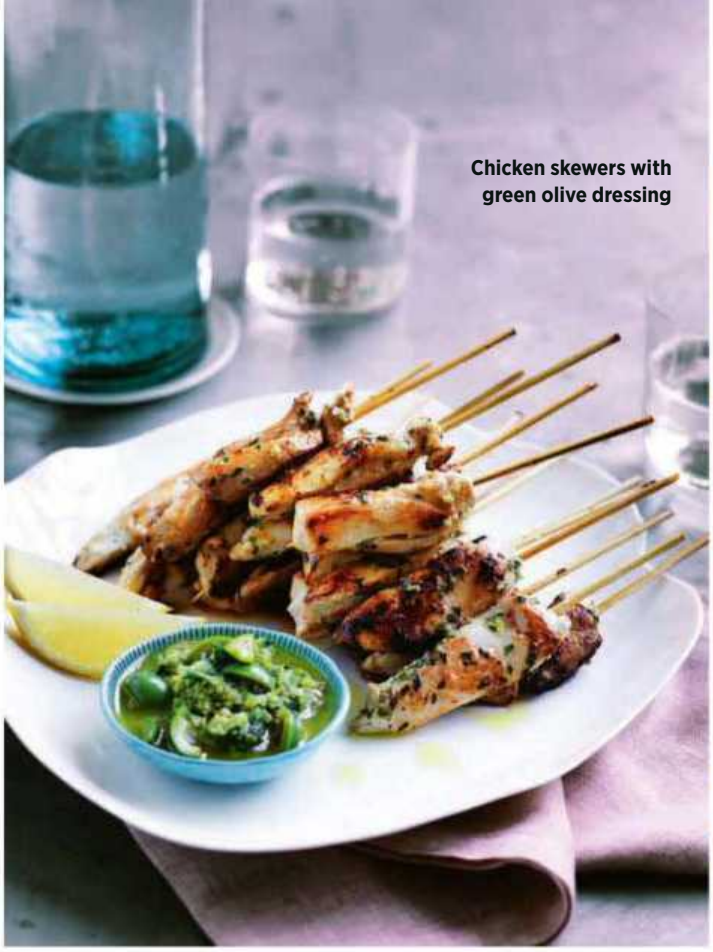


G&T WITH A TWIST

Pour 30ml **Tanqueray London Dry Gin** over ice. Top with tonic water. Squeeze and add in a wedge of grapefruit. Garnish with a mint sprig. *Contains 1 standard drink.*

PAIR WITH Smoked salmon fishcakes and warm herb-marinated olives.

Get the facts **DRINKWISE**.ORG.AU



Chicken skewers with green olive dressing



Tomato tarts with prosciutto

Chicken skewers with green olive dressing

MAKES 30 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES (+ REFRIGERATION TIME)

4 large (800g) chicken thigh fillets
3 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons finely chopped oregano
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon rind
2 tablespoons strained lemon juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
lemon wedges, to serve

GREEN OLIVE DRESSING

½ cup (60g) pitted green olives
2 tablespoons oregano leaves
⅓ cup (80ml) olive oil

1 Cut each thigh fillet into 6 long strips; combine with garlic, oregano, rind, juice and oil in a medium bowl. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate for 2 hours.
2 GREEN OLIVE DRESSING: Coarsely chop 4 of the olives; reserve. Blend or process remaining ingredients until almost smooth. Spoon dressing into a serving bowl; top with reserved olives.
3 Thread one strip of chicken onto each of 24 skewers. Cook the chicken skewers, in batches, on a heated oiled grill plate (or barbecue or grill) for 2 minutes on each side or until chicken is cooked through.
4 Serve chicken skewers with Green Olive Dressing and lemon wedges.

Deborah's tip: Chicken thigh fillets are better to use than chicken breast meat, as their higher fat content will ensure that the meat stays moist during barbecuing. To save time, the chicken can be marinated a day ahead; store, covered, in the fridge.

Tomato tarts with prosciutto

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES

"There's something deliciously decadent about melted cheese, fluffy baked pastry and prosciutto. This upscale pizza is perfect party food."

2 sheets puff pastry
1 egg yolk
½ teaspoon water
1 cup (150g) drained semi-dried tomatoes, chopped finely
1 cup (100g) grated fontina cheese
16 kalamata olives, chopped
5 thin slices (75g) prosciutto, cut crossways into thin strips
1 cup (80g) grated parmesan
dried chilli flakes, optional

1 Place a large oven tray (or two smaller trays) in the centre of the oven. Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced).
2 Place each pastry sheet on a sheet of baking paper large enough to hold the pastry. Stand at room temperature for 5 minutes or until thawed.
3 With a fork, press a 5mm border around the edge of the pastry. Whisk egg yolk with the water. Brush the egg mixture along the border. Prick the rest of the pastry all over with the fork to keep it from puffing too much. Transfer both pastries, with baking paper, onto the hot baking tray or trays. Bake for 10 minutes or until firm and golden. Remove from the oven and increase the temperature to 230°C (210°C fan-forced).
4 Cool pastry slightly and press gently with a clean tea towel to flatten any large air pockets. Scatter a thin layer of semi-dried tomato over pastry; top with the cheese and olives. Place prosciutto strips on top, then sprinkle with parmesan.
5 Bake for 5 minutes or until the cheese has melted. Cool for a few minutes, then cut into strips or small squares to serve. Add a sprinkle of dried chilli flakes, if you like.

Cook It

Perfect for the holidays, there's a divine peach dessert with a rosé syrup, easy-to-make ice-cream sandwiches the kids (and grown-ups) will love, plus a leisurely breakfast dish.



SALMON BRUSCHETTA BENEDICT

Serves 4 Prep 15 mins Cook 20 mins

Preheat a chargrill pan on high. Spray 8 slices sourdough bread with oil. Chargrill for 1-2 minutes on each side until grill marks appear. Set aside. To make hollandaise, combine ¼ cup white wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons water and ¼ teaspoon peppercorns in a small saucepan. Simmer on low, for 5-6 minutes until reduced by half. Strain into a jug and cool. Whisk 4 egg yolks in a heatproof bowl, over gently simmering water. Add reserved liquid, whisking constantly for 3-4 minutes until creamy. Remove from heat. Continue whisking for 4-5 minutes, adding 250g melted, cooled butter in a thin stream until sauce is thick and glossy. In a frying pan, melt 30g butter on medium. Pan-fry 200g **Tassal Tasmanian Salmon Rashers** for 2-3 minutes on each side. Set aside. Heat a frying pan of water with 1 tablespoon vinegar on high until boiling. Turn the heat down so the water is simmering very gently. Slide 8 eggs, one by one, into the water and cook for 2-3 minutes, splashing with hot water, until the whites have set and the yolk is still runny. Remove eggs from water with a slotted spoon. Top toast with spinach leaves, salmon rashers and egg. Season to taste and drizzle with hollandaise to serve.



ROSÉ ROAST PEACHES

Serves 6 Prep 10 mins Cook 30 mins

Combine 2 x 750ml **ALDI Monsigny Rosé Champagne NV** and ½ cup caster sugar in a large saucepan. Stir over low heat until sugar dissolves. Add 2 cinnamon sticks and 1 split vanilla bean. Cover and bring to the boil. Add peaches and reduce heat. Simmer, covered, turning occasionally, for 10-15 minutes until peaches (depending on ripeness) are just tender. Remove peaches from syrup with a slotted spoon. Gently peel away skin. Halve and remove seeds. Reserve 1 cup syrup. Pour reserved syrup into a small saucepan. Simmer on medium for 10-15 minutes until thickened and syrupy. Serve peach halves drizzled with custard and rosé syrup.



ICE-CREAM SANDWICHES

Makes 8 Prep 10 mins (plus freezing)

Top 1 chocolate digestive biscuit with a large scoop of **Sara Lee Incredibly Creamy Sticky Date Ice-cream** (1 litre tub), chocolate side facing down. Top with second biscuit, with chocolate side facing up. Press gently together. Using a butter knife, smooth edges, scraping off any excess ice-cream. Repeat seven more times with 14 remaining biscuits and ice-cream. Roll exposed ice-cream sides in coconut, crushed nuts or crushed popcorn to coat. Place on a tray and freeze for 30 minutes until firm. Remove from freezer for 1-2 minutes before serving.

Sara Lee Frozen Fruit Pie
New Sara Lee Incredibly range is incredibly easy to justify, making the world of everyday just that little bit yummier, with new CRUNCHY cheesecakes, GOOEY lava puddings and CREAMY dessert ice-creams.
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PHOTOGRAPHER: SCOTT HAWKINS. PREPARATION: CARLY SOPHIA TAYLOR. STYLING: JENNENE PLUMMER.



Mediterranean lamb meatballs with white bean dip



Crispy cheese ravioli

Mediterranean lamb meatballs with white bean dip

MAKES **60** PREP AND COOK TIME **40 MINUTES**

1kg minced lamb
1½ cups (105g) stale breadcrumbs
1 large (300g) red onion, chopped finely
2 tablespoons finely chopped chervil
2 tablespoons finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons finely chopped mint
2 teaspoons caraway seeds, toasted
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cloves
2 eggs, beaten lightly
¼ cup (60ml) iced water
vegetable oil, for shallow-frying

WHITE BEAN DIP

400g can white beans, rinsed, drained
1 clove garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon tahini
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon rind
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 To make meatballs, place all ingredients, except the oil, in a large bowl, season; mix well to combine. Using damp hands, roll tablespoons of lamb mixture into balls.
2 Fill a large frying pan with 1cm oil; heat over medium heat. Shallow-fry meatballs, in four batches, turning frequently, for 5 minutes or until browned and cooked through. (You will need to replenish the oil slightly with each batch.) Remove meatballs with tongs or a slotted spoon; drain on paper towel.
3 WHITE BEAN DIP: Process ingredients until smooth.
4 Serve meatballs on a platter; accompany with White Bean Dip.

Deborah's tip: Meatballs can be shaped a day ahead; store, covered, in the fridge. Meatballs can also be cooked over high heat on a lightly oiled barbecue grill plate, turning frequently, for 7 minutes or until browned and cooked through.

Crispy cheese ravioli

SERVES **6** PREP AND COOK TIME **25 MINUTES**

"This is the dish that makes you look like a star without really trying. I like to quickly cook these after everyone has arrived, so the cheese is still warm and gooey. Just ask your guests to pass the platter around among themselves. Naughty but nice."

2 eggs, beaten lightly
2 cups (140g) fresh breadcrumbs
vegetable oil, for deep-frying
500g packet good-quality cheese ravioli
1½ cups (400g) good-quality tomato pasta sauce
2 tablespoons chopped basil
chopped flat-leaf parsley or basil, extra

1 Place egg and breadcrumbs in separate bowls.
2 Half fill a deep-fryer or large saucepan with oil and heat to 190°C (the oil is hot enough when a cube of bread dropped in the oil turns golden in 30 seconds). Dip ravioli in egg, then toss in the breadcrumbs, to coat. Working in batches of five, fry the ravioli for 1-2 minutes or until golden and crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel.
3 Meanwhile, heat the pasta sauce in a small saucepan over low heat until hot. Season to taste and stir in basil; transfer to a heatproof serving bowl.
4 Arrange the ravioli on a platter, sprinkle with the extra parsley or basil and serve with the sauce for dipping.

Deborah's tip: If you prefer not to use a cheese filling, any ravioli works just as well.





Aperol spritz

Aperol spritz

SERVES 1 PREP TIME 5 MINUTES

90ml prosecco (or another dry sparkling white wine)
½ cup ice cubes
dash of soda
60ml Aperol aperitif
1 slice lime or orange, to garnish

1 Pour prosecco into a glass over ice cubes.
2 Add the dash of soda and top with Aperol.
3 Gently stir with a spoon and garnish with a lime or orange slice.

Rhubarb and elderflower mojito

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 10 MINUTES (+ COOLING TIME)

300g rhubarb, cut into 10cm lengths
2 cups (440g) caster sugar
2 cups (500ml) water
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 vanilla bean, split lengthways, seeds scraped
8 (720g) limes, chopped coarsely
1 cup loosely packed mint leaves
1 cup (250ml) white rum, chilled
⅓ cup (80ml) elderflower cordial
1 cup ice cubes
1.25 litres (5 cups) soda water, chilled

1 Place rhubarb, sugar, the water, nutmeg, vanilla pod and scraped seeds in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Cool.
2 Strain the rhubarb mixture over a bowl; reserve syrup. Keep rhubarb for another use (see Deborah's tips). Place lime and mint in a large serving jug. Crush with a muddling stick or rolling pin to release the juice. Add reserved rhubarb syrup, rum, elderflower cordial and ice cubes. Top with soda water.

Deborah's tips: You can reserve the strained rhubarb to flavour smoothies, or spoon on top of porridge, cereal or yogurt. The rhubarb syrup can be made up to 3 days ahead; cover and refrigerate.

Spinach and ginger dumplings with spicy dressing

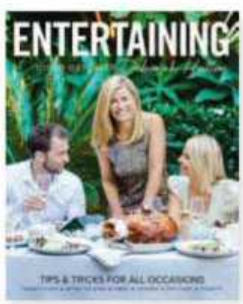
SERVES 4 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES

240g English spinach
227g canned water chestnuts, drained, chopped finely
2 green onions, chopped finely
4cm piece (20g) fresh ginger, grated finely
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 egg, beaten lightly
24 (230g) gow gee wrappers
450g firm tofu, sliced thickly
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 teaspoons sesame seeds, toasted
½ cup loosely packed coriander leaves

SPICY DRESSING
½ cup (125ml) Chinese black vinegar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 fresh small red chilli, sliced thinly

1 SPICY DRESSING: Combine ingredients in a small bowl.
2 Place spinach in a medium heatproof bowl, cover with boiling water; drain immediately. Refresh under cold running water; drain. When cool enough to handle, squeeze excess water from spinach; chop finely.
3 Combine spinach, water chestnuts, onion, ginger, soy sauce and egg in a bowl. Place 2 teaspoons of the mixture in the centre of a wrapper, leaving a 1cm border; brush the edge with water. Fold wrapper over filling; pleat the edge to seal. Repeat with the remaining spinach mixture and wrappers.
4 Cook dumplings in a large saucepan of boiling water, in three batches, for 3 minutes or until cooked through. Drain; keep warm.
5 Meanwhile, pat tofu dry with paper towel. Heat oil in a large frying pan over high heat; cook the tofu for 2 minutes each side or until golden.
6 Place tofu and dumplings on a serving platter; drizzle with Spicy Dressing, then sprinkle with seeds and coriander.

Recipes from *Entertaining Made Easy With Deborah Hutton* by Deborah Hutton, Bauer Books, $39.99, available online at awwcookbooks.com.au.



QUICK + EASY

Festive treat

This Christmas, try these delicious and tasty Gingerbread Men as a great last-minute gift idea or a fun activity to do with the kids.



GINGERBREAD MEN

Makes about 40 biscuits
Prep and cook time 1 hour 20 minutes

3 cups plain flour
1½ cups caster sugar
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon mixed spice
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
200g Western Star Original Butter, melted
1 tablespoon golden syrup
1 egg, beaten lightly
ROYAL ICING
1 egg white
2 cups pure icing sugar, sifted
2 teaspoons lemon juice

1. Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl. Combine butter, syrup and egg in a small bowl. Stir the butter mixture into the dry ingredients. Knead dough until smooth.
2. Divide the dough into three pieces. Roll one piece of dough between two sheets of baking paper until about 3mm thick. Slide dough in baking paper onto a tray; refrigerate for 30 minutes or until firm. Repeat twice with remaining dough.
3. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Line three large oven trays with baking paper.
4. Peel baking paper from top of dough, place back on dough. Turn over and remove top paper. Cut out dough with a 10cm gingerbread cutter, lift with a palette knife and place about 3cm apart on prepared trays. Knead scraps together and re-roll; repeat.
5. Bake, in batches, for 12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on trays.
6. ROYAL ICING: Beat egg white in a small bowl with an electric mixer until foamy; beat in icing sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time. Stir in juice. Pipe on decorations as pictured.



Make your Christmas one to remember!

Christmas is about family and friends, and what better way to celebrate than by sharing delicious food with those most important to you. At the heart of good food is Western Star; a pure, creamy butter with a rich, five-star taste. Whether it's dinner or dessert, take your festive feast to the next level with Western Star and make it a Christmas to remember.

For more Christmas recipes made delicious with Western Star, visit **westernstarbutter.com.au.**

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Creamy Christmas DELIGHT

Make your table the star of the festive season with Anchor Thickened Cream and these delicious desserts.

Chocolate Ripple Christmas Wreath

QUICK TIP
Make these desserts on Christmas Eve, so you can enjoy more time together on Christmas Day.

CHOCOLATE RIPPLE CHRISTMAS WREATH

Serves 6
Prep time 15 minutes (plus refrigeration time)

2 x 500ml (4 cups) Anchor Thickened Cream
½ cup icing sugar
1 cup Baileys Irish Cream
500g chocolate ripple biscuits
fresh mixed berries, to serve

1. Beat cream, icing sugar and ¼ cup liqueur together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form.
2. Place the remaining liqueur in a shallow dish. Quickly dip the biscuits into the liqueur, then spread with a little of the cream mixture. Dip another biscuit into the liqueur and spread with cream mixture. Sandwich the biscuits together and repeat.
3. On a flat, round serving platter or cake stand, arrange joined biscuits, standing upright to form a wreath shape. Repeat with remaining biscuits and half the cream mixture.
4. Spread the remaining cream mixture over the wreath. Cover loosely with foil or plastic wrap and refrigerate for 4 hours to allow the biscuits to soften. Tip: Use toothpicks to avoid plastic wrap attaching to the wreath.
5. Just before serving, decorate the wreath with fresh berries and figs. Cut on an angle into thick slices.



"This mouthwatering creamy Chocolate Ripple Christmas Wreath is quick, simple and delicious."

INDIVIDUAL FROZEN CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

Makes 8
Prep time 15 minutes (plus freezing time)

500ml (2 cups) Anchor Thickened Cream
200ml sweetened condensed milk
2 cups crumbled Christmas cake or pudding
½ cup raisins
fresh raspberries, to serve
CHOCOLATE GANACHE
100g dark chocolate, chopped
250ml (1 cup) Anchor Thickened Cream

1. In a small bowl, beat cream using an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Add condensed milk and whip until firm peaks form.
2. Fold cake and raisins into cream mixture. Pour mixture evenly between 8 x ½ cup moulds. Cover with plastic wrap.
3. Freeze for 4-5 hours. Allow to stand at room temperature for 5 minutes to soften slightly before unmoulding.
4. CHOCOLATE GANACHE: Combine the dark chocolate and ½ cup cream in a small saucepan. Stir over low heat until smooth. Cool ganache slightly before drizzling over unmoulded puddings. Top each pudding with raspberries.



For more information and recipe ideas, visit **www.anchordairy.com.au**.



Foodie gifts

Charm and delight your friends and family with our easy, homemade gourmet presents.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY TRIPLE TESTED TEST KITCHEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BEN DEARNLEY**
STYLING BY **OLIVIA BLACKMORE**

Christmas chutney
For recipe, see page 228.

FOOD PREPARATION BY NICK BANBURY.

Pomegranate tea cordial
For recipe, see page 227.





Toffee brandy sauce



Seedy flatbread

Toffee brandy sauce

MAKES **1 LITRE** PREP AND COOK TIME **30 MINUTES**

To complete the gift, add ice-cream bowls or a scoop.

2 cups (440g) caster sugar
½ cup (125ml) water
2 cups (500ml) cream, at room temperate
2 tablespoons brandy
¼ teaspoon sea salt flakes

1 Combine the sugar and water in a medium saucepan; stir over medium heat, without boiling, until all the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to the boil. Cook without stirring for 10 minutes or until the mixture becomes golden brown (swirling the pan to colour evenly) or reaches 185°C on a candy thermometer.
2 Remove the toffee from the heat and slowly add the cream. The mixture may splutter so do this carefully. Stir until smooth. Stir in the brandy and salt.
3 Transfer to 4 x 250ml sterilised jars (see Test Kitchen tip, opposite). Store in the refrigerator until ready to give as a gift.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Seedy flatbread

MAKES **ABOUT 20** PREP AND COOKING TIME **2 HOURS (+ PROVING TIME)**

To complete the gift, add a miniature bottle of champagne.

1 teaspoon fine salt
400ml water
1 sachet (7g) dry yeast
5 cups (750g) strong bread flour
1 teaspoon each white sesame seeds, black sesame seeds, nigella seeds, poppy seeds
120g butter, melted
sea salt flakes and extra seeds, to decorate

1 Combine the salt and water in a large mixing bowl and stir until salt has dissolved. Add the yeast and stir to dissolve thoroughly.
2 Combine the flour and seeds in a separate bowl, then add the flour mixture in batches to the yeast mixture and mix with your hands until a firm dough forms. Transfer to a lightly floured bench and knead for 5 minutes.
3 Place dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and leave to rise in a warm place for about 1 hour or until it has doubled in size.
4 Preheat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan-forced). Line two large oven trays with baking paper.
5 Divide the dough into 50g portions. Roll four of the dough balls out into long ovals about 2mm in thickness and transfer to the baking trays. Alternatively, use a pasta machine, starting on the widest setting and gradually rolling out to about 2mm thick.
6 Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with the sea salt flakes and extra seeds. Bake for about 20 minutes or until crisp and golden. Transfer to wire rack to cool. Repeat process with the remaining dough.
Suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Store the flatbreads in an airtight container until ready to use. They can be made up to a week ahead.

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Pomegranate tea cordial



Basil and spinach pesto

Pomegranate tea cordial

MAKES **1½ LITRES** PREP AND COOK TIME **10 MINUTES (+ STANDING TIME)**

To complete the gift, add decorative tea glasses.

2 cups (440g) sugar
1 cup (250ml) water
4 strips orange peel
1 stick cinnamon
6 whole cloves
3 cardamom pods, bruised
3 orange pekoe tea bags
1 litre pomegranate juice

1 Put the sugar, water, orange peel, cinnamon, cloves and cardamom pods into a large saucepan; bring to the boil. Boil for 5 minutes, then add the tea bags and remove from the heat. Steep for 30 minutes.
2 Strain liquid into a large jug; cool. Add pomegranate juice and transfer to bottles.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

For a world of foodie gift ideas, go to FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU

Test Kitchen tip: This cordial makes a refreshing summer drink. Pour 1 tablespoon into a glass with a nip of gin and plenty of ice. Top up with soda water. Garnish with a slice of orange.

Basil and spinach pesto

MAKES **ABOUT 3 JARS** PREP TIME **15 MINUTES**

To complete the gift, include a packet of artisan pasta.

100g baby spinach leaves
4 cloves garlic, peeled
⅔ cup (110g) pine nuts
2 large bunches basil (about 200g basil leaves)
1 cup (250ml) extra virgin olive oil
1 cup (80g) finely grated parmesan cheese
extra virgin olive oil, extra

1 Add the spinach to a medium saucepan of boiling water. Boil for 20 seconds, then drain and immediately add spinach to a bowl of iced water to stop the cooking process. Drain and squeeze out excess water.
2 Process the garlic, nuts, basil and spinach in a food processor until chopped finely. With the motor operating, add the oil in a thin stream until combined. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then stir in the parmesan.
3 Spoon the pesto into sterilised jars and top with an extra layer of olive oil. Refrigerate until ready to give as a gift.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: For best keeping qualities, it's important to sterilise jars. The easiest method for sterilising the jars is to put them through the hottest setting of the dishwasher or place them in a large saucepan, cover with cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes. The aim is to finish sterilising the jars and lids at the same time as the recipe is ready to be bottled.



Bread and butter cucumbers

Bread and butter cucumbers

MAKES **8 X 375ML JARS** PREP AND COOK TIME **1 HOUR (+ STANDING TIME)**

To complete the gift, add a beautiful piece of Australian cheddar cheese.

3kg small Lebanese cucumbers (see Test Kitchen tips)
¼ cup (60g) fine sea salt
1½ tablespoons whole black peppercorns
1½ tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
1½ tablespoons fennel seeds
1.5 litres white wine vinegar
3 cups (750ml) water
1½ cups (330g) caster sugar
1½ teaspoons turmeric

1 Slice cucumbers into 2mm slices (a mandolin makes quick work of this). Place in a large bowl and sprinkle with the salt; stir to combine. Transfer to a large colander and stand, at room temperature, in the sink or over a large bowl, for 2 hours.
2 To sterilise the jars and lids, place in a large saucepan of cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Carefully remove with tongs.
3 Place the drained cucumbers in a large bowl; add the peppercorns, mustard and fennel seeds. Use clean hands to mix together well. Carefully divide mixture among the sterilised jars.
4 Combine the vinegar, water, sugar and turmeric in a medium saucepan over medium heat; stir until sugar dissolves. Increase heat, bring to the boil and boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat; carefully pour the hot vinegar mixture over the cucumbers in the jars. The cucumbers must be completely covered and the liquid should reach 1cm from the top of the jar. Wipe the rim of the jars with a clean cloth or paper towel, then seal.
5 Return the jars to a large saucepan of hot water and bring to the boil. Boil for 10 minutes. Carefully remove jars from the water with tongs and set aside to cool.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: Small cucumbers are best for pickling as they have a lower water content. Use oven mitts or rubber gloves to protect your hands when sterilising the jars. You can use this brine for pickling any vegetables or even a combination of vegetables. Try radishes, baby beetroot, cauliflower, asparagus, carrots, fennel or even long green or red chillis.

Christmas chutney

MAKES **8 CUPS** PREP AND COOK TIME **2 HOURS**

To complete the gift, add a ham bag.

1kg green-skinned apples
800g tomatoes, peeled, chopped coarsely
2 large (400g) brown onions, chopped coarsely
1 cup (150g) coarsely chopped dried apricots
1 cup (140g) coarsely chopped seeded dried dates
1 cup (160g) dried cranberries
1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
2½ cups (625ml) brown malt vinegar
2 cups (440g) firmly packed brown sugar
2 teaspoons mixed spice
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 Peel, core and coarsely chop apples.
2 Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan. Cook, stirring, over high heat, without boiling, until the sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour 30 minutes hours or until the chutney is thick.
3 Spoon hot chutney into hot sterilised jars; seal immediately. Label and date the jars when cold.
Suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Cook It

Nothing tastes better than freshly cooked corn on the cob with lashings of premium Australian Ballantyne butter – perfect for your next BBQ! Simply brilliant with Ballantyne!





CHAR-GRILLED CORN WITH CORIANDER & LIME BUTTER

Serves 6. Prep and cook time 15 minutes.

4 corn cobs, husks and silk removed
80g **Ballantyne Spreadable**
1 bunch coriander
1 teaspoon lime juice
¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
Lime wedges, to serve

1. Bring a large pan of water to the boil. Blanch the corn for 1 minute.
2. Heat a char-grill pan over high heat. Brush corn all over with a little of the butter, then cook, turning occasionally, until cooked through and char marks appear.
3. Meanwhile, finely chop coriander roots and coarsely chop the leaves. Combine the roots and half the leaves with the remaining butter and the lime juice.
4. Remove corn from pan and place on a serving platter. Generously spread coriander butter over the corn cobs, sprinkle with smoked paprika and top with remaining coriander leaves.
5. Serve with lime wedges.

Suitable to freeze.
Not suitable to microwave.

COOK IT with Women's Weekly

PHOTOGRAPHER: SCOTT HAWKINS. PREPARATION: NICK BANBURY. STYLING: JANE COLLINS.



Christmas at Maggie's orchard

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALANA LANDSBERRY** STYLING BY **MICHELE CRANSTON**

MAGGIE WEARS MADELEINE CHARLES TOP AND NICOLA WAITE PANTS.



Ocean trout with pinenut, currant and chervil salsa
For recipe, see page 236.

CHRISTMAS IS ALWAYS a much loved celebration and our first choice as a family is to sit outside in the garden. The only thing that might change that would be a 45°C day. This year, for the first time, it just might be at our Orchard House under the shade of the apricot trees as shade is definitely a prerequisite for our climate.

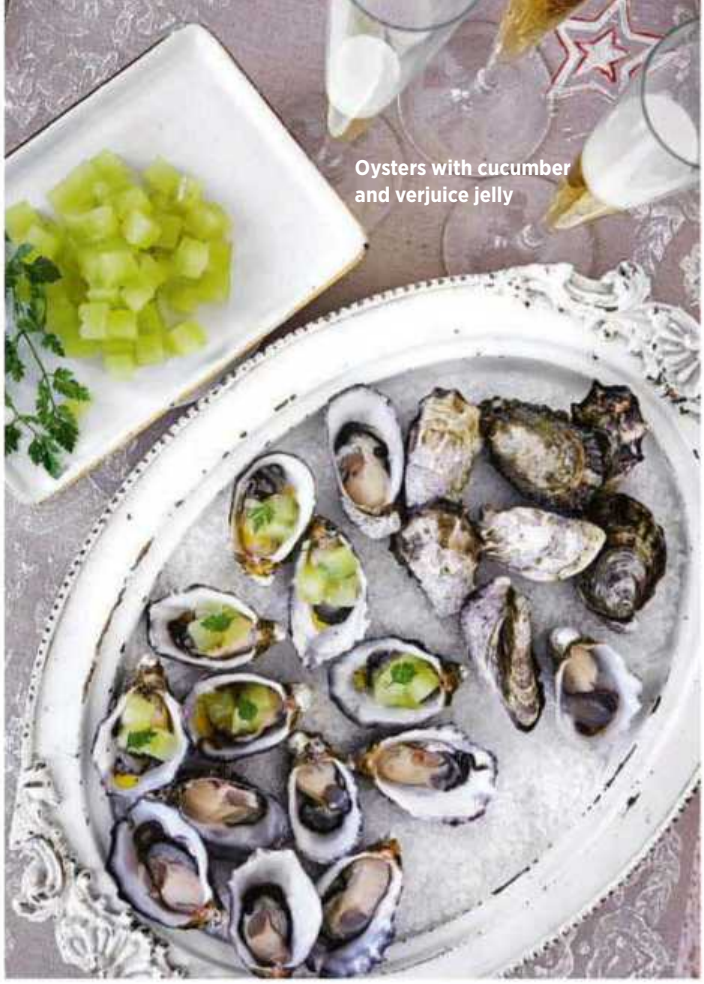
The food needs to be special, indulgent even, if you can afford it. Yet it's more that it's a feast where everything is on the table and no matter what age the guests are, there is something to tempt all. I love the festive feel that comes from decorating the table as much as the tree and having something personal for each member of the family. It's really my favourite time of the year; the weather's usually warm, the food prepared as much as possible the day before and room temperature rather than hot, and everyone being involved, either in the preparation or the clean-up. In our family, this gets divided evenly as lots like to cook and the others, who like to be cooked for, are great at the cleaning up.

In essence, it's all about gathering around the table with people you love.



Heritage tomato salad (top) and Salad of bitter leaves and grapes

For a world of sumptuous salads, go to
FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU



Oysters with cucumber and verjuice jelly

Heritage tomato salad

SERVES 8 AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT PREP TIME 10 MINUTES (+ STANDING TIME)

1kg heritage tomatoes (different colours and sizes), at room temperature
⅓ cup (80ml) extra virgin olive oil
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
100g fior di latte (mozzarella)
small handful basil leaves

1 Cut the tomatoes into slices and wedges so you have a variety of shapes.
2 Drizzle tomatoes with ¼ cup (60ml) of the olive oil, then season with salt and pepper and gently mix together. Set aside for 20 minutes.
3 Tear the fior di latte into bite-sized pieces and place in a bowl, then drizzle with the remaining olive oil and season with sea salt and pepper.
4 Mix the tomatoes and fior di latte together in a large shallow bowl, then scatter with the basil leaves.
Not suitable to freeze.

Salad of bitter leaves and grapes

SERVES 8 AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT
PREP TIME 15 MINUTES

1 small head radicchio, trimmed, washed, dried and torn
2 handfuls rocket, trimmed, washed and dried
3 heads witlof, leaves separated, washed and dried
1 cup (175g) seedless green grapes
1 cup (180g) seedless black grapes
VINO COTTO VINAIGRETTE
¼ cup (60 ml) extra virgin olive oil
3 teaspoons red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon vino cotto
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Chill the radicchio, rocket and witlof in a bowl in the fridge for 1 hour before serving.
2 To make the vinaigrette, place the olive oil, vinegar and vino cotto in a bowl and whisk to combine, then season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.
3 Add the grapes to the leaves. Dress the salad with the vinaigrette moments before you wish to eat it.
Not suitable to freeze.

Verjuice vinaigrette for oysters

MAKES ¼ CUP (60ML), ENOUGH FOR 12 OYSTERS
PREP TIME 5 MINUTES (+ STANDING TIME)

This dressing is amazingly fresh on the palate and I love to serve it spooned over freshly shucked oysters. I use my local South Australian pacific oysters. To keep unopened oysters fresh, wrap them in wet hessian or a wet tea towel when you get them home: they will keep this way for a couple of days. Open them just before eating for maximum flavour.

1 (25g) golden shallot, chopped finely
2 tablespoons verjuice
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon chervil (or micro herbs)
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place the shallot and verjuice in a jar with a screw-top lid and leave for 15-20 minutes or until the shallot turns pink. Add the extra virgin olive oil, chervil or micro herbs and season to taste with salt and pepper. Secure the lid and shake to combine.

Oysters with cucumber and verjuice jelly

MAKES 30 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES (+ REFRIGERATION TIME)

¾ cup (180ml) verjuice
1 tablespoon chopped dill
4 x 2g gold-strength gelatine leaves
2 cups (500ml) cold water
1 (400g) telegraph cucumber, peeled, cut in half lengthways, seeded, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon caster sugar
30 oysters, freshly shucked
extra virgin olive oil, to drizzle

1 Place the verjuice in a small stainless-steel saucepan over low–medium heat, then bring it just to a simmer, being careful not to let it boil or the verjuice will become cloudy. Remove from the heat, add the chopped dill and then set aside to infuse for 10 minutes.
2 Soak the gelatine leaves in a bowl with the cold water or until they have softened. Remove the gelatine and squeeze out any excess liquid. Add to the warm verjuice and stir until the gelatine has dissolved. Set aside to cool.
3 Place the cucumber, caster sugar and a pinch of sea salt in a blender and blend until smooth. Transfer to a mixing bowl and set aside.
4 Strain the cooled verjuice mixture into the cucumber purée and stir to combine well – there should be about 400ml and no less than 1½ cups (375ml).
5 Line an 18cm x 13cm plastic container or dish with a double layer of plastic wrap, then pour in the verjuice and cucumber mixture to form a layer about 1cm thick. Refrigerate the jelly for 6 hours or until set.
6 Carefully turn the jelly out onto a chopping board, then cut into 1cm dice.
7 Place the oysters on a platter or divide them among small plates, then top each oyster with a couple of cubes of verjuice jelly. Drizzle the tiniest amount of olive oil over and serve.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.



Sparkling ruby cabernet spritzer





Sparkling ruby cabernet spritzer

SERVES 6 PREP TIME 2 MINUTES

ice, to serve
2 cups (500ml) freshly squeezed orange juice
1 bottle (750ml) sparkling ruby cabernet

1 Place the ice in six large wine glasses. Divide the orange juice among glasses; top with sparkling ruby cabernet.

Maggie's summer pudding

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES (+ OVERNIGHT REFRIGERATION TIME)

600g frozen blackberries
300g frozen raspberries
¾ cup (165g) caster sugar
1 loaf large size sliced white sandwich bread (you will need about 12 slices)
double cream, to serve

BERRY COMPOTE

1⅓ cups (330ml) red wine
1 cup (220g) caster sugar
250g fresh blackberries
250g fresh raspberries

1 Put the blackberries and raspberries into a large non-reactive frypan and add the caster sugar. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for no more than 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and allow to cool.
2 Choose a mould for your pudding (we've used a 7-cup pudding basin). It needs to be a large, deep dish or jelly mould, although summer pudding can even be made in individual dishes (tea cups work well).
3 Remove the crusts from the bread and cut each slice in half or into shapes that suit your chosen mould. Dip the slices of bread (reserving 2 or 3 slices for the top) in the berry juices in the pan and line the mould, starting with the base and making sure the edges overlap in a pleated pattern. Spoon the berries and the syrup into the mould. Cover the top with the remaining bread slices. Cover the mould with a doubled layer of plastic wrap and then thick brown paper or foil tied with string. Weigh the pudding down with a side plate and a heavy object such as a couple of cans of tomatoes. Refrigerate overnight.
4 BERRY COMPOTE: The next day, bring the wine and sugar to the boil in a medium saucepan and simmer, uncovered, until syrupy. Add the berries and stir very gently to mix. Remove pan from the heat and allow to cool.
5 To serve, take the weight and wrappings from the pudding and carefully run a knife around the edge of the mould. Tap the base to release the pudding and invert it onto a plate deep enough to hold the extra syrup. Spoon the Berry Compote over the pudding and serve with double cream.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

CHRISTMAS TREE FROM MYER.



This sumptuous-looking pudding is light and juicy. A perfect summer dish, it's a great finale to any feast.

Maggie's summer pudding

WATCH OUR VIDEO
To see Maggie at our shoot in the Barossa Valley, download the free ***viewa*** app and scan this page with your smartphone or tablet.



Ocean trout with pine nut, currant and chervil salsa





Ocean trout with pine nut, currant and chervil salsa

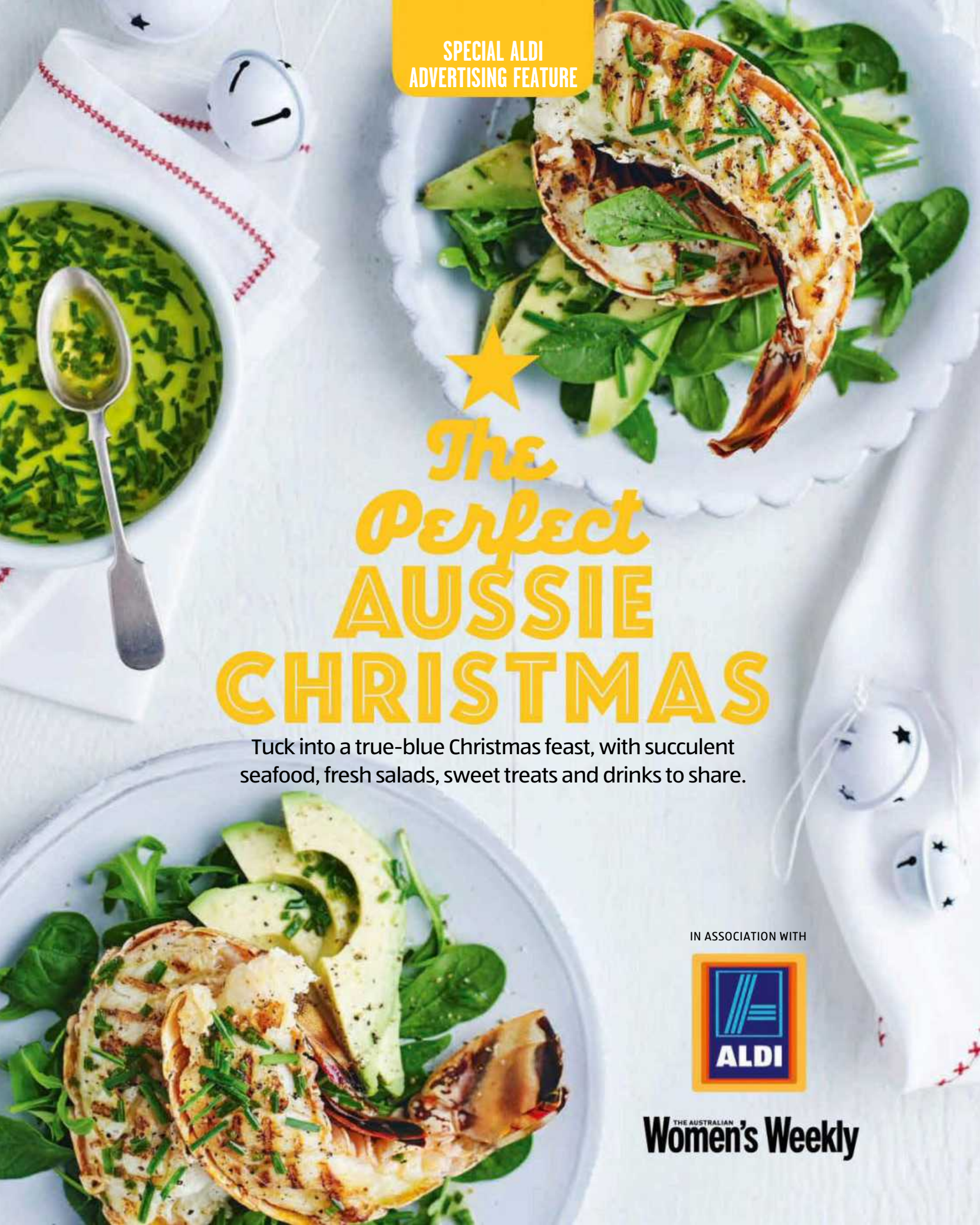
SERVES **8 AS PART OF A MENU** PREP AND COOK TIME **20 MINUTES**

½ cup (80g) pine nuts
½ cup (80g) dried currants
2 tablespoons verjuice
1 medium (170g) red onion, chopped finely
¼ cup (50g) baby capers, rinsed
⅓ cup finely chopped fresh chervil
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 whole side (800g) ocean trout fillet, skin removed, trimmed
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, extra sea salt flakes
2 tablespoons verjuice, extra

1 Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced). Place pine nuts on a small baking tray and bake for 5 minutes or until golden brown. Remove pine nuts from the oven and transfer to a bowl. This will stop the pine nuts cooking.
2 Combine currants and 1 tablespoon of verjuice in a small bowl; microwave on HIGH for about 40 seconds or until just heated through. This will plump up the currants and make them nice and juicy.
3 Combine the onion and the remaining verjuice in a medium bowl. Add the pine nuts, currants, capers and chervil, then stir in the extra virgin olive oil and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
4 Increase the oven temperature to 220°C (200°C fan-forced).
5 Place a piece of foil on a large oven tray. Place the ocean trout on the tray, rub both sides with the extra 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Season both sides with the sea salt flakes making sure that the skinned side is facing down. Fold the edges of the foil up, to make sure all to juices don't run away. Roast for 5-6 minutes; remove from the oven. Drizzle with extra verjuice and rest for 2 minutes.
6 Gently lift and place the trout onto a long serving dish and spoon a generous amount of the salsa along the centre of the trout.
Not suitable to freeze or microwave.

> I love to serve fresh South Australian king prawns on a bed of ice, simply adorned with lemon wedges.

SPECIAL ALDI ADVERTISING FEATURE



The Perfect AUSSIE CHRISTMAS

Tuck into a true-blue Christmas feast, with succulent seafood, fresh salads, sweet treats and drinks to share.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

ALDI

THE AUSTRALIAN Women's Weekly

The Perfect AUSSIE CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE *AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY* FOOD TEAM

Christmas trees, baubles and tinsel aside, nothing says Christmas more than a shared table and a wonderful festive feast. Every family has its own unique food traditions for the big day.

Whether it's a hot lunch with ham, pork, turkey and all the trimmings, or a relaxed seafood spread, our Christmas recipes will give you all the tips to make the meal a resounding success. We hope we have inspired you to share a little Christmas cheer with a glass of something special to kick off the big day, then finish with a flourish by creating one of our simple but showstopping desserts.

On behalf of *The Weekly*, we wish you a very happy and safe Christmas, remembering to cook with love, eat with passion, enjoy a cocktail or two, but most of all, have fun.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY

THE AUSTRALIAN Women's Weekly

ALDI

ALDI.com.au/Christmas

MADE WITH LOVE CINNAMON SNACKS

MAKES 3 CUPS PREP AND COOK TIME 15 MINUTES

550g packet Forrester Festive Mix Tray
2 teaspoons peanut oil
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup dried cranberries
150g packet Sweet Vine Baking Festive Fruit Baking Mix, orange-flavoured

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
2. In a bowl, combine Festive Mix, oil and cinnamon, and mix well. Spread mixture over an oven tray.
3. Bake for 8-10 minutes, stirring once. Add ALDI Baking Mix and gently toss to combine. Set aside for 30 minutes to cool to room temperature. Serve with drinks or package as a gift.



STRAWBERRY SORBET WITH CHAMPAGNE

SERVES 6 PREP TIME 5 MINUTES

Hull and slice 250g punnet strawberries. Freeze slices between freezer wrap. Divide between six chilled champagne flute glasses. Top each with chilled ALDI Monsigny Premier Cru Champagne.

TIP: For a non-alcoholic version for children, top up with lemonade instead.

KIR ROYALE

SERVES 6 PREP TIME 5 MINUTES

Pour 2 teaspoons blackcurrant cordial into the bases of six chilled champagne flutes. Top with chilled ALDI Monsigny Premier Cru Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE SIDE-CAR

SERVES 1 PREP TIME 5 MINUTES

Place 20ml Baroque Brandy, 20ml ALDI L'Esprit D'Orange, 20ml Westcliff Lemon Juice and 15ml sugar syrup in a chilled champagne flute glass; stir gently. Top with chilled ALDI Monsigny Premier Cru Champagne. Garnish with strawberry slices.


100% AUSSIE
ROAST HAM

MARMALADE GLAZED HAM

SERVES 10 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 50 MINUTES

3.5kg BERG Half Leg Of Ham – 100% Aussie roast ham
whole cloves, to decorate
1 teaspoon Stonemill Minced Garlic
1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
200g Grandessa Breakfast Marmalade
¼ cup (55g) firmly packed Merryfield Light Brown Sugar
2 tablespoons Baroque Brandy
2 tablespoons Westcliff Lemon Juice

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
2. Cut through rind of ham 10cm from the shank.
3. To remove rind, run thumb around edge of rind just under the skin. Start pulling rind from widest edge of the ham and continue to pull rind carefully away from the fat up to the shank end. Remove rind completely. Score across the fat at about 3cm intervals, cutting lightly through the surface of the fat (not the meat) in a diamond pattern. Stud the centre of each diamond with a clove.
4. Stir garlic, ginger, marmalade, sugar and brandy in a small saucepan over low heat until sugar is dissolved. Simmer, uncovered, for 3 minutes or until thickened slightly. Stir in lemon juice.
5. Line a large baking dish with overlapping sheets of baking paper. Place ham on wire rack in baking dish. Brush ham well with marmalade glaze; cover shank end and cut surface of ham with foil.
6. Bake ham for 40 minutes, brushing frequently with marmalade glaze during cooking. Remove foil from cut surface of ham and brush with glaze. Bake for a further 10 minutes.

"Make this delicious marmalade glazed ham the centrepiece of your Aussie Christmas lunch."



ROASTED VEGETABLE SALAD WITH GARLIC MUSTARD DRESSING

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 15 MINUTES

½ butternut pumpkin, peeled, chopped coarsely
2 small (400g) kumara, peeled, quartered lengthways
1 bunch Dutch (baby) carrots, peeled
1 red capsicum, seeded, cut into chunks
1 medium (170g) red onion, peeled, cut into eighths
¼ cup (60ml) The Olive Tree Extra Virgin Olive Oil
250g truss cherry tomatoes
2 bunches asparagus
75g The Fresh Salad Co. baby spinach leaves
180g Emporium Selection Persian Fetta, drained, crumbled
¼ cup loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves
GARLIC MUSTARD DRESSING
1 teaspoon Stonemill Minced Garlic
2 teaspoons Colway Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon Remano red wine vinegar
¼ cup (60ml) The Olive Tree Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan-forced). Line two large oven trays with baking paper.
2. Divide pumpkin, kumara, carrots, capsicum and onion between trays. Brush with oil; sprinkle with sea salt. Roast for 25-30 minutes or until tender and golden. Roast tomatoes and asparagus on separate tray for 10 minutes until tender.
3. GARLIC MUSTARD DRESSING: Whisk garlic, mustard and vinegar in a small bowl. Gradually whisk in oil. Season to taste.
4. Layer spinach, vegetables, fetta and parsley on a serving platter; drizzle with dressing before serving.



LOBSTER WITH AVOCADO SPINACH AND ROCKET SALAD

SERVES 6 PREP AND COOK TIME 20 MINUTES

3 Specially Selected Lobster Tails, halved lengthways
120g packet The Fresh Salad Co Baby Spinach & Wild Rocket Salad
1 large (320g) avocado, sliced thinly
¼ cup The Olive Tree Extra Virgin Olive Oil
3 teaspoons Westcliff Lemon Juice
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives

1. Preheat a barbecue or char-grill pan over medium-high heat. Cook lobster until browned all over and just cooked through (about 8 minutes), brushing frequently with garlic butter (see tip, below).
2. Meanwhile, divide salad leaves and avocado slices among serving plates. Drizzle with combined olive oil and lemon juice, and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Top with lobster tails and sprinkle with chives.

TIP: Purchase prepared garlic butter, melt and brush over lobster during cooking. Make your own by mixing 1 crushed garlic clove into 125g melted butter and adding chopped chives.

MORETON BAY BUGS SALAD WITH PANCETTA AND PEA PUREE

SERVES 8 AS ENTRÉE PREP TIME 25 MINUTES (+ REFRIGERATION TIME)

2 cups (240g) Market Fare Frozen Baby Peas
40g Beautifully Butterfly Butter
1 tablespoon Westcliff Lemon Juice
50g sliced round pancetta, chopped finely
1 tablespoon The Olive Tree Extra Virgin Olive Oil
8 Specially Selected Moreton Bay Bugs, halved, flesh removed
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed, halved lengthwise, blanched
70g The Fresh Salad Co Rocket
70g beans, blanched, sliced diagonally
70g snow peas, blanched, sliced diagonally
½ cup cooked Market Fare Frozen Peas
3 green onions (green shallots), chopped finely

1. Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to the boil. Blanch baby peas; drain. Process with butter and juice until smooth. Season to taste; cover to keep warm.
2. Heat a large frypan over medium-high heat. Cook pancetta until crisp; drain on paper towel. Heat oil in the same pan over high heat. Cook bugs for 1-2 minutes on each side.
3. Toss remaining ingredients together. Arrange on a serving platter and top with bugs, pancetta, onion and a drizzle of pea purée.





PRAWN AND MANGO SALAD

SERVES 6 PREP TIME 25 MINUTES

750g cooked large Ocean Royale King Prawns
6 green onions (green shallots)
½ cup (150g) Colway Mayonnaise
¼ cup (60ml) Asian Specialities Sweet Chilli Sauce
150g The Fresh Salad Co Mixed Salad Leaves
3 medium (1.2kg) mangoes, peeled, sliced thickly
⅓ cup fresh coriander leaves

1. Peel and devein the prawns, leaving tails intact. Cut the white part of the onions into long, thin strips. Slice the green parts thinly diagonally. Place in a bowl of ice-cold water.
2. Combine the mayonnaise and sweet chilli sauce in a small bowl.
3. Arrange salad leaves, mango and prawns on a serving platter. Drizzle with the sweet chilli mayonnaise, mainly on the prawns, then top with the drained onion and coriander leaves.

CREAMY POTATO AND SOFT-EGG SALAD

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 40 MINUTES

4 (500g) BERG Bacon Rashers, trimmed, chopped
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped chives
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped dill
1.5kg kipfler potatoes cooked, sliced
¼ cup (35g) Deli Originals Stuffed Green Olives, drained, sliced
1 cup (300g) Colway Mayonnaise
¼ cup (60ml) Farmdale Cream
1 tablespoon Colway Wholegrain Mustard
1 teaspoon Stonemill Minced Garlic
4 Lodge Farms Eggs, soft-boiled

1. Preheat grill. Place bacon on foil-lined oven tray; grill on both sides until browned. Drain on absorbent paper. Chop coarsely.
2. Reserve a quarter of the bacon, chives and dill. Combine potatoes, remaining bacon, chives, dill and olives in a large bowl. Add combined mayonnaise, cream, mustard and garlic; toss gently. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
3. Spoon potato salad into a serving bowl. Top with halved eggs, reserved bacon, chives, dill and extra black pepper.



GARNISH WITH ALDI CHOCOLATE



SALTED CARAMEL FUDGE ICE-CREAM PUDDING

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 30 MINUTES (+ FREEZING TIME)

200g Specially Selected Salted Caramel Fudge, chopped coarsely
400g dark or milk Choceur Chocolate, chopped coarsely
½ cup (60g) White Mill Pecans, toasted, coarsely chopped
1 litre Monarc Indulge Vanilla Opulence Ice-cream, softened slightly
Broken biscuits, shaved chocolate, broken chocolate swirl, to serve

1. Line a 1.25 litre (5-cup) pudding basin with a double layer of plastic wrap or a single layer of freezer wrap, extending the plastic about 5cm over the edge of the basin.
2. Fold the fudge, half the chocolate and pecans into the softened ice-cream. Spoon the mixture into the prepared pudding basin, pressing down firmly. Smooth the top; cover with plastic wrap, then foil. Freeze overnight.
3. Place the remaining chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl; stir over a medium saucepan of simmering water until just melted. Cool slightly.
4. To serve, turn the ice-cream out onto a chilled serving plate. Pour the melted chocolate over the pudding. Before serving, top with biscuits, chocolate shavings, broken chocolate swirl.

CRÈME ANGLAISE

MAKES 1½ CUPS PREP AND COOK TIME 10 MINUTES
(+ STANDING TIME)

1½ cups Farmdale Milk
⅓ cup Merryfield Caster Sugar
1 Stonemill Vanilla Bean, split lengthways
4 Lodge Farms Egg yolks
1 tablespoon Baroque Brandy

1. In a medium saucepan, combine milk, 1 tablespoon sugar and vanilla bean. Bring to the boil. Remove from heat. Stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Strain.
2. In a heat-resistant bowl, whisk egg yolks and remaining sugar together. Whisk milk mixture into egg mixture.
3. Place bowl over a saucepan of gently simmering water – make sure the water doesn't touch the base of the bowl. Whisk over a low heat until mixture coats the back of a wooden spoon.
4. Strain mixture and cover surface with plastic wrap. Serve warm or chill until required. Before serving, whisk in brandy.

SERVE WITH : ALDI Specially Selected 12 month Matured Christmas Pudding.





BROWN SUGAR PAVLOVA WITH IN-SEASON FRUIT

SERVES 8 PREP AND COOK TIME 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES
(+ COOLING AND REFRIGERATION TIME)

2 teaspoons Beautifully Butterfly Butter, melted
2 teaspoons White Mill Cornflour, plus 1 tablespoon extra
5 Lodge Farms Egg whites
½ cup (110g) Merryfield Caster Sugar
½ cup (110g) firmly packed Merryfield Brown Sugar
300ml Farmdale Thickened Cream, whipped
seasonal fruit (sliced peaches, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, passionfruit pulp), to serve

1.Preheat oven to 150˚C(130˚C fan forced). Line a large baking with baking paper. Mark a 20cm x 25cm rectangle on the paper. Brush the rectangle with melted butter and sift over the cornflour.
2. Beat egg whites in a large bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Gradually add the caster sugar, beating until dissolved and scraping down the side of the bowl occasionally. Gradually add the brown sugar, beating until dissolved. Fold in the extra sifted cornflour.
3. Pile the meringue along the centre of the prepared plate. Use a metal spatula or the back of a spoon to spread the meringue over the greased area, making a shallow indent along the centre.
4. Reduce the oven temperature to 100°C (80°C fan-forced). Bake the pavlova in the lower half of the oven for 1½ hours or until dry and crisp. Turn off oven and cool pavlova in oven with door ajar.
5. Top pavlova with cream and prepared fruit to serve.

COCONUT BERRY ICE BLOCKS

MAKES 12 PREP AND COOK TIME
15 MINUTES (+ FREEZING TIME)

300g Sweet Haven Frozen Raspberries
½ cup (110g) Merryfield Caster Sugar
2 cups (500ml) Farmdale Thickened Cream
2 cups (500ml) Asia Specialities Coconut Cream
12 ice-block sticks

1. Stir raspberries and sugar in a medium saucepan over low heat until sugar dissolves; bring to the boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for about 5 minutes or until mixture thickens slightly. Transfer to a small bowl; refrigerate until cold.
2. Meanwhile, beat thickened cream in a small bowl with an electric mixer until firm peaks form. Add coconut cream; beat only until combined. Transfer mixture to a large bowl.
3. Fold raspberry mixture through cream mixture until rippled. Spoon mixture into ⅓-cup (80ml) ice-block moulds; insert sticks. Freeze for about 4 hours or until set.
4. Remove moulds from freezer and stand for about 5 minutes before removing ice-blocks.

MAKE THESE THE NIGHT BEFORE

ALDI

ALDI.com.au/Christmas

Quick bites

The Weekly's Christmas road test

Keen home bakers make their own, but many of us turn to the shops for our festive fix. Here's our round-up of some of the best Christmas treats on offer.

PUDDINGS



WOOLWORTHS Gold Champagne Pudding, 454g, $10. A rich, dense, dark pudding with a serious hit of booze.



WOOLWORTHS Free From Gluten Fruit Pudding, 500g, $5. Sticky and boozy, a very dense, dark pudding.



ITHA'S Traditional Pudding, 500g, $28. Individually made by hand, you can also customise the ingredients to tailor it to your taste. This is for those who prefer a very moist pudding. Other sizes are available.



ALDI Specially Selected Premium Vintage Christmas Pudding, 700g, $13.99. Handmade in Australia and aged for 12 months, this deliciously rich pudding is laden with fruit and, given the quality, the price is very impressive.



NEWCASTLE'S PUDDING LADY Traditional Christmas Pudding, 1kg, $44. This is our top pick of the puddings, full of delicious brandy-soaked fruit. Other sizes are available.

CAKES



COLES Finest Tropical Jewel Fruit Cake, 800g, $15. True to its name, this light fruit cake is bursting with sweet tropical fruit.



ALDI Specially Selected Luxury Christmas Cake, 800g, $13.99. With loads of juicy fruit, this cake is dark and moist, and has just the right balance of flavours.

MINCE PIES



ALDI Specially Selected Spiced Spekulatius Fruit Mince Pies, 4 pack, 300g, $3.99. We love these pies with a delicious gingerbread pastry twist.



COLES Finest Fruit Mince Pies, 6 pack, 410g, $6. The all-butter shortcrust pastry on these pies gets our vote for traditional mince pies.

BISCUITS



WOOLWORTHS Gold Indulgent Roasted Almond Shortbread and Irresistible Candied Orange Shortbread, 500g, $13. Buttery Greek biscuits – so delicious, they should be available all year round!



ALDI Celebre Luxury Butter Shortbread Selection, 425g, $5.99. This buttery Scottish shortbread melts in your mouth.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HAWKINS. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE.

Ask the experts

It's a once-a-year treat that can be tricky to bake. Our food experts **Fran Abdallaoui** and **Pamela Clark** share their tips for success.



I often make boiled fruit cake and want to know the secret to avoiding the burnt bits of dried fruit on top of the cake. Can you help? ***G. Porter, via email.***

There are several reasons your cake can over-brown. First of all, be certain that the pan you're using is deep enough. Lining the side of the pan with two layers of brown paper and two layers of baking paper, and extending the paper 5cm above the edge will help protect the top. You can also try smoothing the top of the uncooked cake with a large, flat rubber spatula. Make sure your oven shelves are placed so that the cake isn't too close to the top of the oven; it should be baked in the lower half. Place a sheet of foil loosely over the top halfway through cooking time or when the cake is browned enough. Give the cake quarter turns several times if it is browning unevenly. You can also experiment with lowering the oven temperature and marginally extending the cooking time. Covering the top of the cake with nuts before cooking helps to protect any pieces of fruit.

Christmas Eve fruit cake

SERVES **16** PREP AND COOK TIME **2 HOURS 30 MINUTES (+ COOLING TIME)**

750g dried mixed fruit
185g butter, chopped coarsely
¾ cup (165g) firmly packed brown sugar
½ cup (125ml) brandy
1 tablespoon honey
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
3 eggs, beaten lightly
2 teaspoons mixed spice
1¼ cups (185g) plain flour
¼ cup (35g) self-raising flour
2 tablespoons brandy, extra

1 Wash the fruit in a colander, drain, then place in a large saucepan. Add the butter, sugar, brandy and honey. Stir over medium heat until butter is melted and sugar dissolved. Stir in soda, then cool to room temperature.
2 Grease a deep 20cm round cake pan; line with two layers of baking paper and two layers of brown paper, extending paper 5cm above side of pan. Preheat oven to 150°C (130°C fan-forced).
3 Stir eggs, spice and flours into fruit mixture; mix well. Spread mixture into pan, smoothing the top with a spatula. Bake for about 2-2 hours 15 minutes or until cooked when tested. Brush hot cake with extra brandy.
4 Cover hot cake with foil; wrap in tea-towel. Cool overnight.
Suitable to freeze. Not suitable to microwave.

Test Kitchen tip: This cake can be made up to six months ahead. Store in an airtight container in a cool dry place or refrigerate if the weather is humid.

For more last-minute cake recipes, go to FOODTOLOVE.COM.AU

HAVE A QUESTION? Send it to Ask The Experts, *The Australian Women's Weekly* Test Kitchen, GPO Box 4178, Sydney, NSW 2001, and include a daytime phone number and your address. See Contents for the location of Bauer Media Limited's Privacy Notice.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOUISE LISTER. STYLING BY OLIVIA BLACKMORE. RECIPE FROM *THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY CAKES & PUDDINGS* MINI COOKBOOK, $5.95 FROM NEWSAGENTS AND SELECTED SUPERMARKETS.

THERE'S CHRISTMAS

and then there's buttery Moreton Bay Bugs drizzled in Dijon cream Christmas



$25.99

Moreton Bay Bugs with Creamy Dijon Mustard Sauce 720g
$36.10 per kg

$27.99

Lobster Tails with Garlic Butter Glaze 380g
$73.66 per kg

ALDI

ALC7219_B_FPC_AWW



HAVE A *kinder* CHRISTMAS

Celebrate with a delicious, vegetarian feast!
Kind to animals, your health and the planet.

Clockwise from right: Tofurky meat-free roast served on rich roasted ratatouille with golden polenta diamonds and pistou; roast beetroot and pumpkin salad and 'magic' egg-free meringue nests with whipped coconut cream and fresh summer berries.



Orange and fennel salad



Lemony grilled asparagus with toasted almonds

Did you know

DID YOU KNOW 1 IN 4 AUSTRALIANS ARE ALREADY ENJOYING MORE MEAT-FREE MEALS

Christmas is the season of celebrating with family and friends, and one way we show we care is by serving the traditional Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. More and more Australians are deciding to make Christmas a time of celebration for everyone by adding healthy and delicious animal-free dishes to the menu. All the tempting dishes on these pages are tasty, easy to make, full of goodness and 100% animal-friendly! The wide variety of animal-free food now readily available — such as a Tofurky meat-free roast (see right for your chance to win one) — means it's easier than ever to celebrate tradition and kindness at the Christmas table.



FREE GIFT **Pledge to have a kinder Christmas at KinderChristmas.com and we'll send you this stunning limited edition ornament!**

WIN ONE OF 10 DELICIOUS TOFURKY ROASTS.

One way to enjoy a more compassionate Christmas is to add a 100% animal-friendly roast to the menu! We have 10 Tofurky meat-free roasts to give away, enter now! Visit **KinderChristmas.com** to enter.

Animals Australia
the voice for animals

You can find all the recipes pictured here and more at **KinderChristmas.com**





DECK THE HALLS

Embrace the Christmas spirit with these fun and easy craft projects so you and your children can create some yuletide magic.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MAREE HOMER**
STYLING BY **KERRIE-ANN JONES**





FLORISTRY AND STYLING ASSISTANCE BY SINÉAD AMBROSE. STYLING ASSISTANCE BY DANIELLE EL HELOU. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE.



Santa sleigh, $65, from Papier D'Amour, (02) 9380 3100, papierdamour.com.au. **"Wonderful Time" Christmas gift bag, $25 (small), from Cabin Co,** cabinco.com.au. **Large glass bauble, $69.95, from paper2,** (02) 9318 1121, paper2.com.au**. Christmas Santa sack with gold tree, $50, from Cabin Co,** as above. **White paper star, $55, from Papier D'Amour,** as above. **Mixed bauble tree ornament pack, $10, from Big W,** 1300 244 999, bigw.com.au. **Vinter 2015 top star in gold, $4.99, from IKEA,** ikea.com/au (store locations only). **Joy & Jolly styrofoam glitter star, $9.99 for pack of six, from Spotlight,** 1300 305 405, spotlightstores.com.



Charm 16-piece cutlery set in gold, $99, and Paynter bowl in gold spot, $14.95 each, from Freedom, 1300 135 588, freedom.com.au. **Centre Stripe woven napkin set in Light Pool, $32 for set of four, from West Elm,** 1800 239 516, westelm.com.au. **Diamond dinner plates with gold foil, $29 each, and Diamond side plates with gold foil, $22.90 each, from Citta Design,** cittadesign.com.

Craft top tip *Getting the kids involved in making Christmas craft is a great way to involve them in all the excitement of the season. It's also a way of creating the much-loved family heirlooms of future Christmases – the special baubles and decorations that only come out at this magical time of year.*



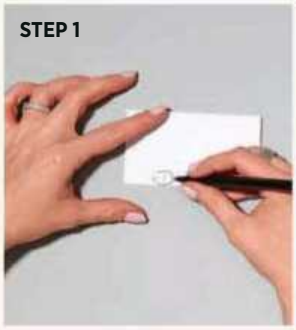
Honeycomb place-card

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Teeny Tiny 5cm honeycomb balls, from Poppies for Grace,** (03) 9761 4734, poppiesforgrace.com
- **Double-sided tape**
- **Place cards**
- **Calligraphy pen or marker**
- **Scissors**

1 Write the name of your guest down the bottom of the place card.
2 Cut a small piece of double-sided tape and stick to the inside edge of the honeycomb ball.
3 Open up the honeycomb ball and stick one inside edge to the top back of the place card and the other inside edge to the top front of the place card.









Gold spray-painted bottles

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Mixed clear glass bottles or vessels**
- **Gold spray paint**
- **Newspaper**

1 Lay out the newspaper to cover a large flat surface.
2 Shake the bottle of spray paint and spray the bottle from top to bottom. Rotate around the bottle until you have sprayed the whole bottle. Leave to touch dry.
3 Spray a light second coat to even out and cover any drips and streaks.

Glitter cone centrepieces

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Shamrock craft deco foam cone, 250mm**
- **Shamrock craft deco foam cone, 350mm**
- **Shamrock craft deco foam cone, 450mm**
- **Foam glue**
- **Paintbrush**
- **Ruby Rock-It Glass Glitter**
- **Newspaper**

1 Lay out the newspaper to cover a large flat surface.
2 Paint the foam glue all over the foam cone.
3 Sprinkle the glitter onto the newspaper.
4 Roll the cone back and forth over the glitter, rotating it until it's fully covered in glitter.
5 To fill any empty spots, sprinkle the glitter from the canister onto the foam cone (while holding over the newspaper).
6 To reuse any excess glitter, you can slide it back into the canister from the fold in the newspaper. ➤

SHAMROCK AND RUBY ROCK-IT BRANDS AVAILABLE FROM SPOTLIGHT, 1300 305 405, SPOTLIGHTSTORES.COM, AND OTHER CRAFT STORES.



Pipe-cleaner snowflakes

WHAT YOU'LL NEED FOR 1 SNOWFLAKE

- **15 white pipe-cleaners, cut to these lengths: 3 x 15cm, 6 x 7cm, 6 x 5cm – Arbee chenille sticks, packet of 20, from Spotlight,** 1300 305 405
- **Scissors**

1 Take 2 x 15cm pipe-cleaners and make a twist. Repeat with the third 15cm pipe-cleaner to make a six-point star shape.

2 Take a 7cm pipe-cleaner and, at its halfway point, twist it around one leg of the star 3cm from the centre point. Repeat for all six legs.

3 Take a 5cm pipe-cleaner and, at its halfway point, twist it around one leg of the star 6cm from the centre point. Repeat for all six legs.







Paddle-pop Santa decoration

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Arbee mini craft sticks**
- **Shamrock Naturals fine jute twine roll**
- **American Crafts cardstock, in white and red, all from Spotlight,** 1300 305 405
- **Hot glue gun**
- **Fine tip markers**
- **Scissors**

1 Lay a white paddle pop stick horizontally over the white cardboard and hot glue it into place, to form the white brim on Santa's hat.

2 Take a few more paddle pop sticks and arrange them vertically underneath the first paddle pop stick to form Santa's beard, making sure you leave enough room for his eyes, nose and cheeks. Glue into place.

3 Using a pair of scissors, trim the excess cardboard around the paddle pop sticks.

4 Lay down your red piece of cardboard and, using the hot glue, adhere the face and beard to the red cardboard.

5 Take two red paddle pop sticks and form them into a triangle to create Santa's hat. Trim the excess red cardboard.

6 Using fine tip markers, draw in Santa's eyes, nose and mouth.

7 Using a piece of twine, hot glue the ends to the back of Santa's hat, creating a loop to hang your ornament from.

Paddle-pop Christmas tree decoration

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Arbee mini craft sticks (use the green only)**
- **Hot glue gun**
- **Shamrock Naturals fine jute twine roll**
- **Scissors**

1 Take one paddle pop stick and lay it vertically on the table. This will form your tree's backing and act as the tree trunk.

2 Take another paddle pop stick and place it horizontally across the first paddle pop stick, leaving roughly around 1cm at the bottom to create the trunk. Glue into place.

3 Using a pair of scissors, trim about 7mm off another paddle pop stick and glue it above the previous one.

4 Continue to cut small amounts off the ends of each paddle pop stick so they get shorter as they reach the top of the tree.

5 Using a piece of twine, hot glue the ends to the back of the tree, creating a loop to hang your ornament from.

ARBEE, AMERICAN CRAFTS, VERSACOLOR AND SHAMROCK BRANDS AVAILABLE FROM SPOTLIGHT, 1300 305 405, SPOTLIGHTSTORES.COM, AND OTHER CRAFT STORES.





Jolly & Joy battery operated LED lights, white, $9.99, and **Bouclair Snowy Invitation ceramic Noel, silver, $19.99, from Spotlight,** 1300 305 405. **Bell wreath, 30cm, in gold, $59.95, from Freedom,** 1300 135 588.

Washi tape Christmas card

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **American Crafts cardstock, various colours**
- **Scissors**
- **Washi tape in various colours and patterns**

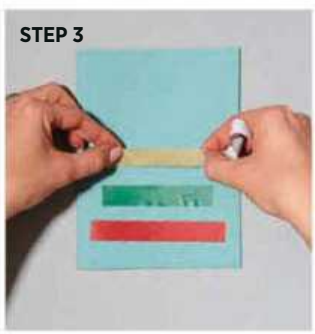
1 Cut out a greeting card from the cardstock to your preferred size.

2 Cut a length of washi tape to approximately 10cm long and stick it at the bottom of the card, 4cm from the bottom.

3 Cut another length of washi tape from a different colour or pattern shorter than the first length and stick it above the first piece. Repeat this step, making each length shorter than the previous one and sticking them above the previous piece until you get to the top of your tree.

4 Cut a 2cm length of tape and use this as the base of the tree.







Reindeer thumbprint card

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

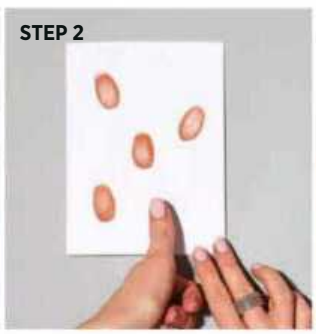
- **VersaColor stamp pad in Umber**
- **Red and black felt tip pens**
- **American Crafts cardstock**
- **Scissors**

1 Cut out a card from the cardstock to your preferred size.

2 Gently push your thumb into the ink pad and press thumb down onto the card. We made about five thumbprints. Wait until dry.

3 Using pens, draw antlers, eyes, noses and cute accessories onto the reindeer to give them their own unique personalities. ➤







Cabbage Patch Kids' Magical *Christmas*

Share the magic of life with Cabbage Patch Kids this Christmas. Adopt your unique Cabbage Patch Kid today – no two are alike – and become part of the legend.



Cabbage Patch Kids have been loved by millions of mothers and daughters around the world for more than 30 years, so this Christmas, why not help a special someone adopt their very own Cabbage Patch Kid to love? With great new fashions to try, including Adventure, Boho and Glamour girls, it's so much fun to find your very own Cabbage Patch Kid, take the oath and adopt them today. Celebrate the magic of Cabbage Patch Kids with the next generation and introduce them to a new friend to love.

AVAILABLE AT MAJOR RETAILERS AND INDEPENDENT TOY STORES

Cabbage Patch Kids Fashionalities RRP $69.99. For stockists and customer service, call 1800 244 543.



Gold bell garland, $39.95, from paper2, (02) 9318 1121. **Vinter 2015 candle decoration, $4.99, from IKEA,** ikea.com/au. **Reindeer table decoration in gold, $12, from Big W,** 1300 244 999.

Felt tree garland

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Arbee viscose wool felt sheets**
- **Shamrock naturals fine jute twine roll**
- **Scissors**
- **Pencil**
- **Tree template (available on the internet)**
- **Hot glue gun**

1 Print the tree template and carefully cut the template out with sharp scissors.
2 Place template over felt and trace around the template with a pencil onto the felt. Cut out tree. Repeat until you have about 15 trees.
3 Arrange your trees on a flat surface and place a piece of twine over the top of the trees.
4 Carefully glue the twine into place to complete your garland.









Fresh natives and bauble wreath

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Jolly & Joy metal wreath**
- **Vivaldi florist wire**
- **Mixed baubles tree ornament pack in gold**
- **Fresh native foliage**
- **Scissors or secateurs**

1 Cut the florist wire into small pieces approximately 5cm long.
2 Cut native foliage into small pieces approximately 10cm long or smaller.
3 Place the foliage into position on the wreath and secure with florist wire.
4 Repeat Step 3 until complete, then secure baubles with florist wire to a section about one-third to half of the wreath.

Skurar plant pots in red, $7.99 each, Fejka artificial potted plant Christmas trees, $14.99 each, Vinter 2015 candle decorations, $4.99 each, and Gottgora lanterns, $14.99 each, all from IKEA, ikea.com/au.



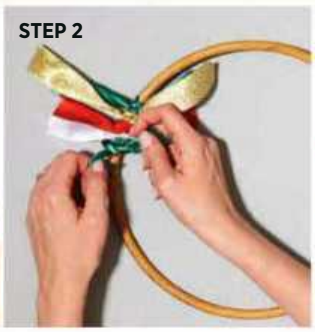
Ribbon wreath

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Ribbon in various colours**
- **Wooden ring**
- **Scissors**

1 Cut pieces of ribbon in different colours about 10cm-15cm long.
2 Take a ribbon piece and tie it around the ring, knot to secure.
3 Using the scissors, carefully trim the ribbon to neaten up.
4 Repeat the above steps until you have tied the ribbons around the whole of the ring to complete your wreath. ➤

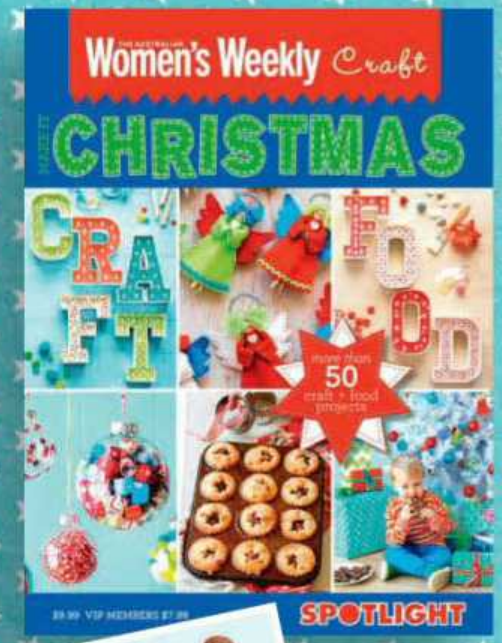






JOY & JOLLY, ARBEE, SHAMROCK AND VIVALDI BRANDS AVAILABLE FROM SPOTLIGHT, 1300 305 405, SPOTLIGHTSTORES.COM, AND OTHER CRAFT STORES.

MAKE IT
CHRISTMAS





RRP
ONLY
$9.99

EXCLUSIVE TO
SPOTLIGHT
from OCTOBER 1



Pipe-cleaner angels

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Arbee chenelle sticks, packet of 20, multi-coloured, 12mm wide x 30cm long (1 pipe-cleaner for each angel)**
- **Scissors**
- **Ruler**
- **Yarn, 25cm long**
- **Bead**
- **Button with two holes**

1 Make a bend in the pipe-cleaner 13cm from one end. Then make a second bend 13cm from the opposite end. The result will be a U-shape with a base 4cm wide.

2 The next bend is made 6cm from one of the ends. Then from the opposite end, make another bend in the pipe-cleaner 5cm from the end. The result is a loose loop.

3 Make another bend 3cm from one end of the pipe-cleaner, then make another bend 3cm from the opposite end.

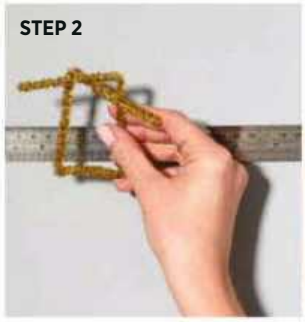
4 Measure up 4cm from each side of the base of the original U-shape. Cross the two wire legs at the 4cm point. Make a half twist to hold the crossed wires in place.

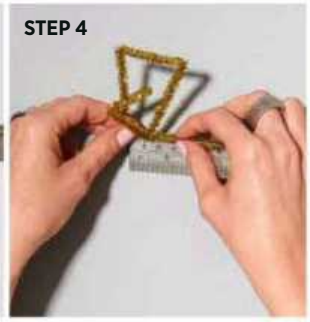
5 Make the first wing of the angel by pulling one of the ends across the twist point. Fold in the end of the wire behind the twist point. Repeat on the other side.

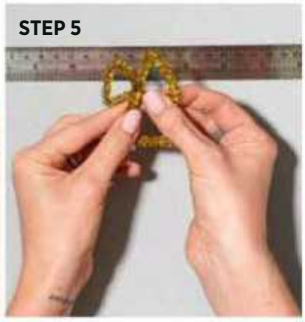
6 Thread one end of the yarn through the open body portion of the angel ornament and tie a knot.

7 Thread both pieces of yarn through the hole in the bead.

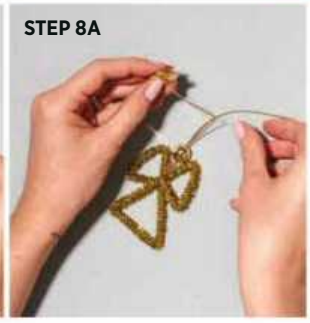
8 Thread each piece of yarn through each hole in the button and tie a knot at the button end and another at the top. Your angel decoration is ready to hang. ■













ARBEE BRAND AVAILABLE FROM SPOTLIGHT, 1300 305 405, SPOTLIGHTSTORES.COM, AND OTHER CRAFT STORES.

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Visit **www.epson.com.au/AWW** to enter. The competition ends 31st January 2016.

[1]Based on average monthly print volumes of about 150 pages (ET-2500, ET-2550, ET-4500), 300 pages (ET-4550).
[2]Yields based on ISO/IEC 24712 pattern with Epson's methodology. For further information visit www.epson.com.au/ecotank

Beautiful bonbons

You'll need

- Jolly & Joy DIY bonbon kit
- Small gifts to fit inside
- Kaisercraft 'Mix & Match' paper collection: 1 sheet each 'Crosses' and 'Confetti'
- Decorative-edge scissors
- Naturals burlap ribbon: Red and Cream
- Scissors
- Double-sided tape
- About 4.5m narrow ribbon
- Jolly & Joy assorted foam adhesive shapes

1 Following the instructions on the packet, assemble the bonbons, remembering to tuck a small gift inside each one.

2 Cut lengths of scrapbook paper or burlap ribbon to fit around the bonbons and trim edges of paper with decorative-edge scissors. Wrap paper or burlap around bonbons and fix in place with double-sided tape.

3 Tie narrow ribbon around both ends of each bonbon and finish with a small bow.

4 Decorate each bonbon with a foam shape.

You could also add a self-adhesive initial to each bonbon instead



Make it merry
SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTMAS craft

Adorn your home with delightful Christmas craft, hand-made with love and the joy of the season – the magic starts at Spotlight.



Enlarge the templates to different sizes to make a little forest!

Festive felt trees

You'll need

For one tree

- Felt (90cm wide): 0.2m in colour of choice
- Scissors, pins and needle
- Sewing machine and matching sewing thread
- Stranded embroidery cotton in contrast colour

1 Enlarge the Felt Christmas Tree templates (found in *The Australian Women's Weekly Craft Make It Christmas* book) to 200% or the size you require, then trace and cut two Base Cones, one Top Layer, one Middle Layer and one Lower Layer from wool felt. (1cm seam allowance is included, unless specified otherwise.)

2 Pin straight sides together on one Base Cone and sew. Press seam open and trim seam away from top corner. Repeat with remaining Base Cone piece.

3 Turn one of the Base Cones right-side out. Place the other Base Cone inside the turned-out cone, wrong sides together, and pin bottom edges together. Sew as pinned, 5mm in from lower edge.

4 Sew the straight edges of the Lower Layer together. Press seam open and trim seam from corner. Turn right side out and place over Base Cone, aligning seams at the back. Pin layer in place at front.

5 Repeat Step 4 to make Middle Layer, then place it over the cone and pin in position.

Noel, noel

You'll need

- Heidi Swap Marquee Love letters: N, O, E, L
- Bella Kraftastic Paperz: 1 sheet each in 'Trimming', 'Wigwam', 'Starry Night' and 'Entwine'
- Scissors, scalpel and cutting mat
- 8 x AAA batteries (2 per letter)

Apply this techinque to any letter and create any word you like

1 Carefully remove the contents from each box, making sure to keep the instructions, as they show you exactly how to thread the lights so that there aren't any excess cords at the back — that way the battery pack and cords are completely hidden.

2 Using the templates provided in each letter pack and following the manufacturer's instructions, trace each letter onto the wrong side of a different paper (remember to flip the templates over so they're back-to-front), then carefully cut out each letter, using scissors, changing to a scalpel and cutting mat when it becomes too fiddly for scissors. Don't forget to cut out the holes for the lights.

3 Gently push each paper cut-out into its matching cardboard letter. They should be a snug fit, but you don't need glue, as the lights will keep the paper in place. Now carefully insert the bulb caps from the front through the holes.

4 Following the wiring diagram in the pack, insert the lights from the back. Add batteries to the battery pack and position it as shown in the diagram.

A decoration that will go on giving pleasure throughout the year!



All projects are featured from the *The Australian Womens Weekly Craft Make it Christmas* book available in all Spotlight stores

Christmas terrarium

You'll need

- DIY glass terrarium
- Sphagnum moss
- Tweezers and scissors
- Succulents
- Water spray bottle
- String or cord

1 Place sphagnum moss into the terrarium, half-filling the inside, using tweezers if necessary. Place small succulents into the moss and mist with a water spray bottle, so that the moss will stay green.

2 Cut a 20cm length of either string or cord, attach to the hook on the top of the terrarium and hang on the Christmas tree. Spray with a mist of water every four days to keep fresh.

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DECORATING YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE *4 ways*

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MAREE HOMER**
STYLING BY **KERRIE-ANN JONES**



Traditional trimmings

Tree: Rocky Mountain fir Christmas tree, 1.8m, $199.95, from The Christmas Warehouse, 1300 293 981, christmaswarehouse.com.au.
Jolly & Joy white cotton stars, 25cm, $9.99 each, and Jolly & Joy Nutcracker decorations, 14cm, $6.99 each, from Spotlight, 1300 305 405, spotlight.com.au.
Sleigh and car wooden ornaments, $7.95 each, from Kikki-K, (03) 9645 6346, kikki-k.com.
Vue Mode eight-piece shatterproof star bauble value pack, eight-piece shatterproof grid bauble value pack and eight-piece shatterproof plain bauble value pack, $12.99 each, from Myer, 1800 811 611, myer.com.au.
Australian House & Garden Nordic six-piece white bells set, $12.99, from Myer, as before.
Vue Mode glitter 3D snowflakes, $6.99 each, from Myer, as before.
Down To The Woods Festival heart and hand, wings and horse decorations, $17 each, from The Woodsfolk, (03) 9853 7581, thewoodsfolk.com.au.
Under tree: Green wrapping paper, $2, and ruby red satin bow, $1.49, from The Base Warehouse, (02) 9699 7792, thebasewarehouse.com.au.
Tomtenisse wooden ornament (hanging on present), $7.95, Christmas tree wrapping paper, $3.95 per sheet, small cloth gift bag, $4.95, star paper ornament six-pack, $12.95, Cute Small Christmas gift pack, $29.95, and shaped gift tags, 10-pack, $8.95, all from Kikki-K, as above.
Polished brass jars, set of two, $90, from Zakkia, (02) 8002 7498, zakkia.com.au.
Rose gold striped wrapping paper, $7 per roll, jute reindeer, $180, and Santa sack post stamp, $45, all from Papier d'Amour, (02) 9362 5200, papierdamour.com.au.
Vue luxe glitter sitting reindeer with faux fur collar, $19.99, from Myer, as above.
Small metal tree in Gold, $19.95, from Freedom, 1300 135 588, freedom.com.au.
Sofa and armchair: Jaako Blush three-seater sofa, $999, from Zanui, 1300 668 317, zanui.com.au.
Coomba cushion in Red and Green, 30cm x 30cm, $203 each, from Top 3 By Design, 1300 867 333, top3.com.au.
Beige toned reindeer hide, $379.01, from Hides Of Excellence, hidesofexcellence.com.au.
Batgirl armchair in Charme Tan, $1499, from Freedom, as above.
Mercer + Reid mohair throw in Firefly, $139.95, from Adairs, 1300 783 005, adairs.com.au.









STYLING ASSISTANCE BY SINEAD AMBROSE AND CORINA KOCH. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE. ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE WHERE WEBSITES ARE QUOTED.

Sleek Scandinavian style

Tree: One two tree, 150cm, $589, from One Two Tree, onetwotree.com.au.
Jolly & Joy black baubles, nine-pack, $3.99, from Spotlight, 1300 305 405, spotlight.com.au.
OYOY wooden elf and tree decorations, $59 each, and Ferm Living star topper, $69, from Designstuff, (03) 9592 2906, designstuff.com.au.
Down To The Woods blackboard tree swing tags, $7 each, and grey fawn decorations, $11 each, from The Woodsfolk, (03) 9853 7581, thewoodsfolk.com.au.
BIG W big bauble pack in silver, $10, from Big W, 1300 244 999, bigw.com.au.
Australian House & Garden Nordic six-piece bells set in white, $12.99, from Myer, 1800 811 611, myer.com.au.
Under tree: Visionar decoration in Light Grey, $9.99, Dark Grey, $14.99, and hanging decoration in White, $8.99, all from IKEA, ikea.com/au (store locations only).
Large silver dot paper, 500mm x 10m, $14.95, silver foil poly (wrapped around gift), 30mm x 5m, $3.95, and Dancer Prancer kraft paper roll, 500mm x 10m, $14.95, all from Inky Co, (03) 9239 5080, inkyco.com.au.
Silver stripe wrapping paper, $7, from Papier d'Amour, (02) 9362 5200, papierdamour.com.au.
Jolly & Joy silver stars bead garland, 2.7m, $1.99, from Spotlight, 1300 305 405, spotlight.com.au.
Side table: Stockholm console table with shelf in oak and walnut, $499, from Life Interiors, lifeinteriors.com.au.
Lily Fink woodland wallpaper in Ivory, $110.50 per lineal metre, 1.25m wide, from Emily Ziz Style Studio, (02) 9380 4180.
Message Me Board, $120 (board only), holds 12 message tiles sold seprately, from One Two Tree, onetwotree.com.au.
Little Lamb felt garland in monochrome, $40, and white bell wreath, $45, both from Papier d'Amour, as above.
Visionar gift wrap decoration, set of eight, in Grey and White, $4.99, from IKEA, as above.
Tom Dixon stone candle holders, short, $115, and tall, $175, from Dedece, (02) 9360 2772.
OYOY wooden tree decoration, $59 each, from Designstuff, (03) 9592 2906, designstuff.com.au.
Large strapped marble hurricane, $229, from Clickon Furniture, (03) 9417 1183, clickonfurniture.com.au.
Floor: Living Space wood and knitted stool in Charcoal, $99.99, from Spotlight, as above.
Uashmama metallic bag in Platino, $64, from Life Interiors, as above.
Icelandic Grigio Brisa sheepskin rug, $229, from Hides Of Excellence, hidesofexcellence.com.au. ►





"Monochrome and minimalist, this grown-up Christmas tree takes the fuss out of the festive season."





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HO - HO - HO !!







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Available now at Target









Dreaming of a white Christmas

Tree: White Christmas tree, 183cm, $69, and Tropicana pack of six blue baubles, $4, both from Target, 1300 753 567, target.com.au.
Honeycomb balls, small, in light blue and blue, $6 each, from Papier d'Amour, (02) 9362 5200, papierdamour.com.au.
Australian House & Garden Nordic 27-piece shatterproof decoration value pack, $21.99, from Myer, 1800 811 611, myer.com.au.
Under the tree: Down To The Woods life-size fawn, $176, and reindeer, $29.95, from The Woodsfolk, (03) 9853 7581, thewoodsfolk.com.au.
Lytworx 9m white LED eight-function rope light, $30, from Bunnings, bunnings.com.au (store locations only).
Teal green, Caribbean teal and metallic silver wrapping paper, $2 each, from The Base Warehouse, (02) 9699 7792, thebasewarehouse.com.au.
White wrapping paper, $8.95, from News King Bondi Junction, (02) 9387 7899.
Mirrored star, $59, from West Elm, 1800 239 516, westelm.com.au.
Holiday fund jar, $10, from Target, as above.
Jolly & Joy silver garland wire star, 2.7m, $1.99, from Spotlight, 1300 305 405, spotlight.com.au.
Blue tinsel tree, $15, and silver rattan star, $65, both from Papier d'Amour, as above.
On mantel and floor: Lyra wooden star, large, $39.95, from Freedom, 1300 135 588, freedom.com.au.
Jolly & Joy light up words, $29.99, from Spotlight, as above.
Silver tin trees, large, $25, and small, $15, from Papier d'Amour, as above.
Arthur armchair in ash and light grey fabric, $949, from Life Interiors, lifeinteriors.com.au.
Queen Of Sheba woollen throw, $852.50, from Woollen Collective, woollencollective.com. ➤

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Beach inspiration

Tree: Rocky Mountain fir Christmas tree, 1.8m, $199.95, from The Christmas Warehouse, 1300 293 981, christmaswarehouse.com.au.
Jute star tree topper, $35, wool and jute baubles, large, $10 each, small, $5 each, string balls, $7 each, and cones, $7 each, all from Papier d'Amour, (02) 9362 5200, papierdamour.com.au.
Starfish decorations, large, $7.50 each, small, $5 each, and shell decorations, $5 each, from My Island Home, (02) 9362 8760, www.myislandhome.com.au.
Under tree: Teal green wrapping paper, $2, from The Base Warehouse, (02) 9699 7792, thebasewarehouse.com.au.
PPS kraft paper roll, 375mm x 15m, $4.98, from Officeworks, 1300 633 423, officeworks.com.au.
Down To The Woods Little Lamb garland in white, $39, from The Woodsfolk, (03) 9853 7581, thewoodsfolk.com.au.
Silver starfish, $20 each, from My Island Home, as above.
Mint dipped belly basket, $35, from Olli Ella, (02) 9328 1978, olliella.com.au.
Jolly & Joy white cotton stars (in basket), 25cm, $9.99 each, from Spotlight, 1300 305 405, spotlight.com.au.
Sofa: Karlstad three-seat sofa in blekinge white, $499, from IKEA, ikea.com.au (store locations only).
Bahama Palm cushion, $65, from A Colourful Life, acolourfullife.com.au.
Winter Wonderland cushion, $129, from BoConcept, (02) 9437 0066.
Mt Frizzle blanket in Natural, $139.95, from CottonOn, 1800 420 176, cottonon.com.
Coffee table: Sean Dix Forte round timber coffee table, 90cm, $990, from Clickon Furniture, (03) 9417 1183, clickonfurniture.com.au.
Pearled abalone shell tree, large, $295, and small, $195, from My Island Home, as above.
Mt Woodnote spicy wood and vanilla candle, $19.95, from CottonOn, as above.
Metallic devore silver cowhide rug, $726, from NSW Leather, (02) 9319 2900. ■







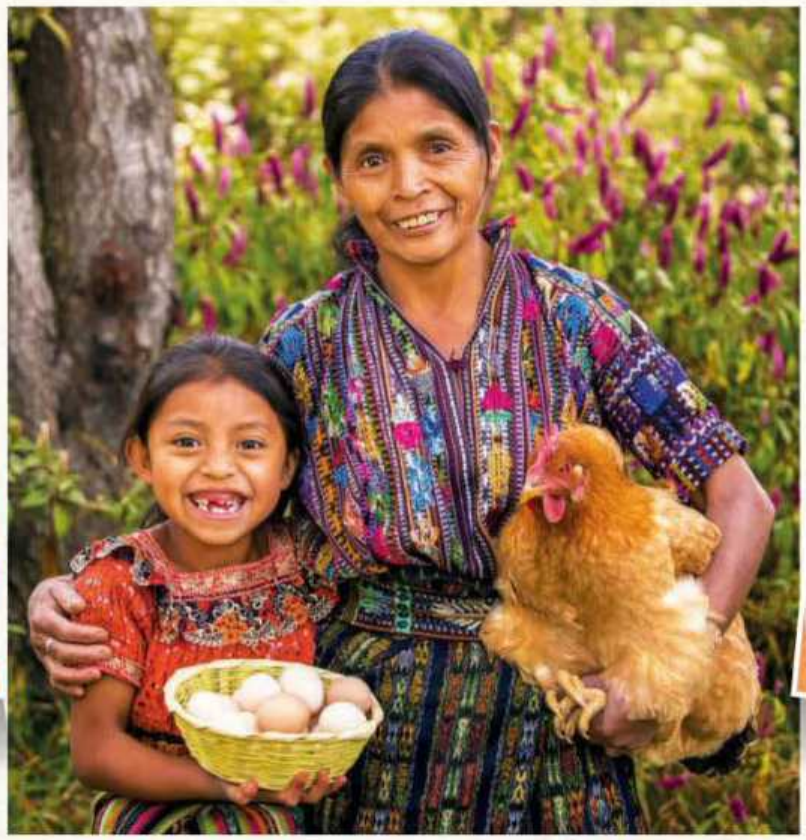
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No, I'm not a Grinch!

Just why do we still embrace ice, holly and snow on our festive greetings? **Mrs Moneypenny** reveals her very own Christmas card revolution.



MRS MONEYPENNY is Heather McGregor, a businesswoman who has been a columnist at the UK's *Financial Times* for over 15 years. She is the author of several books, including *Careers Advice For Ambitious Women* (Penguin). You can follow her on Twitter (@mrsmoneypennyft), or send her an email at mrsmoneypenny@ft.com.

JEKYLL AND HYDE would be a good way to describe me when it comes to Christmas cards. In the office, I am one person; professional, mindful of cost and practical. At home, it is quite different. Christmas is a lovely time of year to hear from people and I would hate it if we didn't send or receive cards. Real, physical cards.

I am not an enthusiast for eCards (so impersonal – emails sent with a click of the mouse!), but on the other hand, every December, a stack of cards arrives on my desk, only to be sent swiftly to the recycling. At home, it is another story. Every card is pegged up on ribbon that I have strung up all over the kitchen. Other than the tree, they are our only Christmas decoration.

My view at work is not surprising. I worked in my company for four years before I bought it. Every November, we started arguing about who should get a Christmas card from us. Finally, 800-plus cards would be ordered and sit in a meeting room for a couple of weeks while we went in to sign the ones going to the people we knew. Then they were taken to the post office and sent at great expense, to hit the recycling bin elsewhere.

The first thing I did when I bought the company was dispense with this waste of time and resources. Now we have a smaller, well-defined list of people who get presents, not cards – usually chocolate.

Yet at home, what card to send? There is the practice of sending pictures of one's children. I did this for a few years when mine were much younger. Now, I am not sure that pictures of three youths aged 25, 21 and 17 are so appropriate. With all those hormones raging, you can be sure that I would have to Photoshop the result. (One thing no one tells you about raising teenage boys – they steal your concealer. It's bad enough admitting to breakouts at the age of 53, without going to your make-up bag and finding your concealer missing.)



As a majority Australian family, it would be nice to send an Australian Christmas card this year, not least to remind people of its world domination in the rugby.* What makes a truly Australian Christmas card? The first Australian-printed Christmas cards were made in the 1880s, after a competition by John Sands, a company that still exists, albeit American-owned. I think it worth reflecting on the circular they published at the time: "*Hitherto we have been compelled to import these cards from England, America and the Continent, where they are produced in immense numbers; but being published for climates of temperature and season different to our own, they are never specially appropriate here. In order that the competitors should leave the beaten track, I made it a condition that Australian subjects only should be used, with the result that instead of sending home cards with ice, holly &c, our friends will have the pleasure of receiving them enhanced by seeing on our cards subjects totally new to them, and at the same time be able to notice the advance Australia is making in the fine arts …*"

Searching for a 21st-century version of authentic Australian Christmas cards, devoid of ice, holly, etc, I found the website alldownunder.com where a husband and wife team has laboured for over a decade to bring information about Australia to those far away. It is also a place to get Australian eCards, complete with koalas in Santa hats.

I may not bring my Christmas card habits home from the office, but this year, I will bring home another Christmas practice – "Secret Santa". This will stop my husband saying, "I don't know what on earth to buy you", after living with me continuously for 365 days since the last time he bought me a Christmas present. The process I won't import from the office is the random draw – I will allocate who buys who a present and set the price limit. That way, I can be sure that we don't all go overboard and end up with a pile of stuff that has to be returned. I will extend this to my parents, who are 87 and visiting on Boxing Day – I am still living with a hideous set of cake tins I didn't have the heart to explain were not to my taste. Total control at home and at work. Maybe I am not so different in those places after all. ■

** NB: Like all good Christmas cards, I wrote this early. If Australia doesn't win, yes, I am red-faced.*

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Love at first SIGHT

Climb aboard the Defiance, a stylish yacht that has passed the test of time.





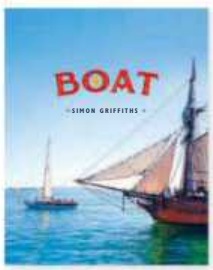

Owner Nicole Shrimpton (below, left) has lovingly restored Defiance, which is now seen as one of the most stylish yachts on Sydney Harbour.

THERE ARE MORE than 510,000 registered boat owners in Australia and the passion and playfulness of those proud boaties is captured in photographer Simon Griffiths' new book *Boat*.

Beautiful, historic Defiance was the first eight-metre yacht to be completely designed and built in Australia. Shipwright Ernest Digby and his three sons built her in 1935 in their backyard in Williamstown, Victoria. Ernest was quite unusual in that he was a designer, owner, builder and racer of boats. He was also commodore of the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club for a time.

Defiance is famous for having participated in five Sydney to Hobart yacht races and has had a colourful racing life, winning races in Victoria and New South Wales. Her current owner, Nicole Shrimpton (below), has plans to take her to Europe to compete in the International 8-metre World Cup in Brittany.

Nicole has restored her to beautiful condition, painting her a "1930s green", she says. "It was love at first sight when I saw Defiance. Boats bring out the best in you and Defiance has brought out the best in me." Nicole has sought out the most talented people to work on her and all the love, time and money she has invested make Defiance one of the most stylish yachts on Sydney Harbour. ■



This is an edited extract from *Boat* by Simon Griffiths, published by Lantern. Available now.




PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIMON GRIFFITHS.

Clippings

Jackie French shares festive season gardening tips and sets a Christmas quiz.

HOW TO HAVE A BLOOMING CHRISTMAS

1 **DELIGHT** in Christmas bells (Blandfordia spp), a native tufted lily with red or yellow bell-like flowers, for a pot or rockery.

2 **PLANT** "Christmas lilies", thick-stemmed fragrant white lilies that bloom from December to January. Tiger lilies may bloom for Christmas, too, if you keep them well-watered with their heads in sunlight and their feet in dappled shade.

3 **BUY** pots of bloomers such as spreading petunias and hang them in baskets either side of the front door (as long as your front door gets plenty of sun) where they'll have maximum impact.

4 **WATER!** In summer's heat, a good feed and watering three or four weeks before Christmas and regular watering until then will give you another bloom of roses, more flowers on your annuals and dahlias, and agapanthus and other summer bloomers out by Christmas Day.

5 **THINK** summer flowering shrubs: buddleja or butterfly bush, hibiscus for frost-free areas, the dinner plate-sized flowers of Magnolia grandiflora, or the white to pink haze of smoke bush.

6 **GO** for patio glory – pots or hanging baskets of dwarf bougainvillea in white, purple, red and orange shades, or sweetly cherry pie-scented heliotrope in white or purple.

Garden tip

Next year, why not plant bright annuals in spring? You'll enjoy lots of colour in your garden all through summer.



Nothing says Christmas like a fresh-cut tree to decorate.

The Christmas Garden Quiz

Does "kiss under the mistletoe" grow in Australia?
Yes, there are hundreds of Aussie mistletoes – look for any leafy growth on a tree that doesn't look quite the same as the foliage on the rest of the tree. Aussie mistletoes work just as well as European ones – Blu-Tack a sprig above the door and pucker up.

Why is poinsettia called the Christmas flower?
Because tradition says that a poor girl prayed (in mid-winter) for flowers at Christmas and the poinsettia (right) bloomed. In fact, poinsettia's flowers are not made up of petals, but are the brightly coloured bracts and the potted poinsettias you buy for Christmas here have been "forced"to bloom out of season. Yet they are still gorgeous, bright and Christmassy, and make a stunning gift.



What is the best way to stop Christmas tree needles from dropping?
Buy an artificial or living tree. All cut trees will drop needles, but standing them in a bucket of water, just as you'd place flowers in a vase, will keep them fresh for longer, as will placing them in a cool spot out of direct sunlight.

Can I buy a holly bush at the garden centre?
Possibly. However, they are boring bushes, prized only because, in snowy climates, their green leaves and red berries were the only colour around.

Which are the best Aussie Christmas trees?
My favourites are the brightly coloured New South Wales Christmas bush (Ceratopetalum gummiferum) with its gaudy red calyces, the white, pink or mauve flowered Victorian Christmas bush (Prostanthera lasianthos), Tasmanian and South Australian Christmas bush (Bursaria spinosa) with their creamy white, honey-scented flowers, Western Australian Christmas tree (Nuytsia floribunda) with its brilliant yellow flowers or Queensland's Christmas Orchid (Calanthe triplicata) with spikes of white flowers that look beautiful in shaded pots on the patio. Yet any potted native that has thick foliage and a neat shape can be made to look superb with decorations.

Why don't my Christmas roses bloom at Christmas?
Christmas rose, or hellebores, blooms in mid-winter – quite appropriate for a northern hemisphere Christmas, but not so much for our warmer climate.

What do reindeer really like to eat?
Reindeer moss, which is actually a lichen. Yet I have it on good authority that Rudolph loves Vegemite sandwiches and carrots.

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Home hints

Georgina Bitcon offers seasonal tips for cleaning up glitter and making Christmas decorations, plus there's a reader's prize-winning hint.



ROLL UP
If you're making sparkly Christmas cards and decorations, use a sticky lint roller to clean up the vestiges of glitter from your work surface.

Easy bake biscuits
Dollop biscuit dough into ice cube trays, freeze, then pop out and store in ziplock bags. When needed, place on a greased tray, thaw, flatten with a fork and bake.

Christmas all wrapped up
Wrap Christmas-themed cookie cutters with narrow decorative ribbon (hold the ends with a dab of glue) and use them as simple ornaments on your tree.

Push up with pegs
If your small child has trouble pushing an ice-block out of its plastic packaging, clip a clothes peg across the bottom of the tube, moving it upwards as the ice-block is eaten.

Ingenious ice cubes
For a festive punch, make extra big "ice cubes" in muffin pans, using fruit juice and strawberries, mint leaves and citrus slices in the mix. They look gorgeous and will not dilute the punch as they melt.

No blunt knives
Stuck in a rented holiday house with blunt knives and no sharpener? Turn a ceramic mug upside down and pull the blade along the unglazed edge on the bottom until it is sharper.

A cool solution
Fill your top-loading washing machine with ice to keep canned or bottled drinks cool at your next party. After the party, let the ice melt, then run the spin cycle to empty the machine.

Seal away sand
Seal your phone into a ziplock bag for the beach – it keeps sand and water out and you can still use the screen for text messages.

Garland with a twist
Use 2-litre plastic soft drink bottles to store bead garlands when you take down your Christmas tree. Put a twist tie round one end of the garland and hook it round the neck of the bottle for easy retrieval.

READER'S PRIZE HINT
Use baking paper under your food on a communal barbecue hotplate – it's hygienic, stops the food sticking and leaves the hotplate clean for the next person.
R. Knox, Loch, Vic.

SHARE YOUR DOMESTIC SECRETS Send your handy hints or questions to: Home Hints, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, GPO Box 4178, Sydney, NSW 2001, or email openline@bauer-media.com.au. We pay $75 for the reader's prize hint each month. While every effort is made to ensure the efficacy of each hint, we cannot take responsibility for individual results. Letters cannot be answered personally. See the Contents page in this issue for the location of Bauer Media Limited's Privacy Notice.

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Top: Fisher & Paykel 6kg Vented Dryer (DE6060G1). Bottom: Fisher & Paykel WashSmart™ Eco 8kg Top Loader (WA8060E1).

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BENEFUL Medleys are packed with tender meat, wholesome grains and vitamin-rich veggies, all wrapped up in a home-style gravy - perfect for mixing with dry dog food. Preparing a healthy and delicious meal for your favourite little friend has never been better – from the moment you open the pouch right down to squeezing out the very last drop of gravy.

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FREE NUTRITION GUIDE

Use the free ***viewa*** app and scan this page to check-out the free interactive nutrition guide for your furry friend!

What's *on*

The must-see shows, movies, events and exhibitions.



At the galleries

There's something for everyone at art galleries around the country this month, showcasing some of the world's most influential artists.

The ***National Gallery of Victoria*** in Melbourne is bringing together two of the most significant artists of the 20th and 21st centuries – Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei – to explore their influence on contemporary life. *Andy Warhol/Ai Weiwei* runs from December 11 until April 24.

In Canberra, ***The National Gallery of Australia*** is celebrating one of Australia's greatest artists, Tom Roberts, with an exhibition of more than 130 of his works from private and public collections. The exhibition, *Tom Roberts*, showcases his landscapes (below) and most famous paintings, from December 4 to March 28.

At the ***Art Gallery of NSW***, *Modernists: Highlights From The European Collection* will display major works from artists and photographers such as Pablo Picasso, Giorgio Morandi and Max Dupain until July next year.

In Queensland, *Lure Of The Sun* at the ***Queensland Art Gallery*** will explore the artist Charles Blackman's experiences in the Sunshine State until January 31.





On stage

Academy Award winner Geoffrey Rush will return to centre stage at the Roslyn Packer Theatre for Sydney Theatre Company's new production of *King Lear*, from November 24 to January 9. As the ageing king must make decisions about his realm, a portrait of a man trying to reconcile the reality he sees in his mind with the world around him emerges in one of Shakespeare's classic plays. For tickets, visit sydneytheatre.com.au.





At the movies

SECRET IN THEIR EYES

Julia Roberts and Nicole Kidman (above) deliver gripping drama in this crime thriller. Jess (Roberts) and her tight-knit team of FBI investigators are suddenly torn apart as they discover they're investigating the murder of Jess' teenage daughter. *Opens November 19.*

TRUTH

Go behind the scenes in this newsroom drama detailing the 2004 US television probe into then President George W. Bush's military service. Cate Blanchett (above, right, with Andrew McFarlane) plays news producer Mary Mapes, whose team of researchers scramble to validate the story, then, in its aftermath, have to defend their credibility as a scandal unfolds. *Opens December 3.*

ALSO ...

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2 Jennifer Lawrence is back in the action-packed final instalment of the franchise, as Katniss and District 13 engage in an all-out battle for revolution against the Capital. *Opens November 19.*

Star Wars Harrison Ford returns to take us to a galaxy far, far away for this latest *Star Wars* flick, set 30 years after *Episode VI – Return Of The Jedi*. *Opens December 17.*

In The Heart Of The Sea Chris Hemsworth's at the helm of this historical drama, as the crew of a whaling ship, destroyed by a mammoth whale, braves storms, starvation and panic at sea. The real-life disaster inspired literary classic *Moby Dick*. *Opens December 3.*

FESTIVE FANCIES

On Christmas Eve, little Clara begins a magical journey into a world of toys which come to life, delicate dancing snowflakes and the beautiful Sugarplum Fairy, who reigns over the Kingdom of Sweets. It's the classic Christmas tale, *The Nutcracker*, and the whole family will enjoy Queensland Ballet Company's production this festive season at the Playhouse, QPAC, from December 11 to 23. Visit queenslandballet.com.au.



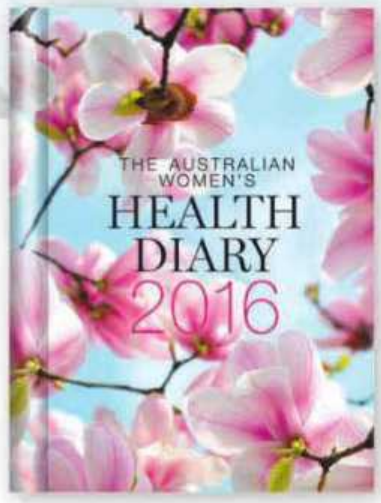
COMPILED BY NICOLE HICKSON. JAMES GREEN. GEORGES ANTONI. ANDY WARHOL: *THREE MARILYNS*, 1962, ACRYLIC, SILKSCREEN INK AND GRAPHITE ON LINEN. THE ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM, PITTSBURGH. © 2015 THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, INC./ARS, NEW YORK. TOM ROBERTS: *SLUMBERING SEA, MENTONE*, OIL ON CANVAS, NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE.



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Christmas BOOKS GIFT GUIDE

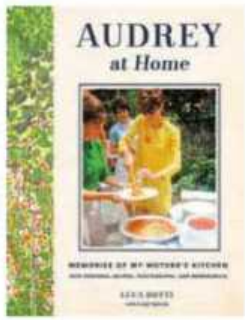
From tales of love, loss and Mamma's cooking to candid memoirs and comic rewrites, here's a shelf-full of gift ideas.



THE FORGOTTEN NOTEBOOK *BY BETTY CHURCHER, THE MIEGUNYAH PRESS.*
In a poignant dedication, Betty Churcher pays tribute to Roy Churcher, who died on Christmas Day 2014, "my husband for nearly sixty years". Sadly, the artist herself died earlier this year, shortly after completing this, the third in her Australian Notebook series. The lost notebook was discovered by Churcher and contained a swag of beautiful sketches she had made from museums including The Louvre. She used to sketch the Great Masters to return to Australia, where she was director of the National Gallery between 1990 and 1997, and plan exhibitions.



THE LAKE HOUSE *BY KATE MORTON, ALLEN & UNWIN.*
Set over a 70-year span from 1933, on a rambling Cornwall, England, estate, the sense of place in Morton's new novel is intoxicating. On the night of the annual Midsummer's Eve party at Loeanneth (The Lake House), 11-month-old heir Theo Edevane disappears amid a backdrop of glowing lanterns. When police detective Sadie Sparrow stumbles upon the abandoned estate in 2003, its pull is magnetic. A teacup left on the table, the piano lid open ... her investigative gut tells her something terrible happened here.

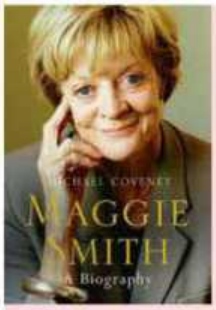


AUDREY AT HOME: MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER'S KITCHEN, *BY LUCA DOTTI, HARPERCOLLINS.*
"Before letting her go," writes the son of the late screen legend, Audrey Hepburn, and his psychiatrist father, Dr Andrea Dotti, "I must try to let them [his children] know who their grandmother was, behind that enormous black sheath and the large sunglasses." And he certainly invites us into an astonishingly intimate place with recipes, recollections and rare photographs. Amusingly, little Luca and brother Sean's favourite dish was penne with ketchup! (Recipe included.)

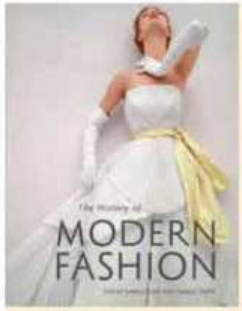
WENDY WHITELEY AND THE SECRET GARDEN *BY JANET HAWLEY, PENGUIN.*
Mums and dads love to bring their children to the secret garden at the foot of Wendy Whiteley's cream bagged-brick house in Sydney's Lavender Bay. Once an ugly wasteland, a grief-struck Wendy began transforming it into a beautiful sanctuary when artist husband Brett died in 1992. Daughter Arkie delivered a gift of Bangalow palms, which stand proud today, all the more dignified since the loss of Arkie, too, from cancer. "The amazing thing about life is that deep sadness can lead you on a path to renewal and discovery," says Wendy, who sees herself as mother to the magical place, yet shares it as a gift for everybody.

For garden lovers





MAGGIE SMITH: A BIOGRAPHY *BY MICHAEL COVENEY, ORION.*
At the age of 80, Maggie Smith is one of the world's most acclaimed actresses and also extremely private. The British Dame and star of *Downton Abbey* has only done a handful of interviews and, consequently, little is known about the private world of this extraordinary star. This biography is the second written by theatre critic Michael Coveney, neither receiving endorsement nor input from Dame Maggie. Yet, it is nevertheless compelling. This is a fascinating insight into a glamorous world of film and theatre.



THE HISTORY OF MODERN FASHION *BY DANIEL JAMES COLE AND NANCY DEIHL, LAURENCE KING PUBLISHING.*
Meticulously detailed and with over 600 illustrations from museum collections as well as unforgettable *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* magazine covers from the 1930s, this tome draws from the advent of the sewing machine in the 1850s to the "mixed messages" of the 2000s. Always a good sign when the divinely unconventional six-foot, cadaverously thin Milanese Marchesa Luisa Casati gets a look-in – she posthumously inspired John Galliano.

OCTOBER WINNER

CONGRATULATIONS TO BARBARA BOND from Victor Harbor, South Australia, the winner of the October issue AWW Book Club competition who loved reading *In The Midst Of Life* by Jennifer Worth. "I believe the author, through her nursing experiences, has identified what makes a good citizen. This book is in the top 10 on my list of best reads," writes Barbara.

REVIEWS BY JULIET RIEDEN AND KATIE EKBERG. THINKSTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES.

DECEMBER *best buys*

Go window-shopping, without leaving your home, with this great selection of products.



1. Animals Australia
If you care about what you put in your shopping trolley and agree that animals don't belong in factory farms, then this tote bag from Animals Australia is a must! Eco-friendly and 100% recycled. Get it online at AnimalsAustralia.org.

2. *The Lake House* by Kate Morton
A missing child ... An abandoned house ... An unsolved mystery ... From the top-selling author Kate Morton comes a tale of intertwined destinies in a spellbinding story of heart-stopping suspense.

3. Aldi Christmas
Handmade in the Hunter Valley, the classic Specially Selected Premium Vintage Christmas Pudding, 700g, is boiled in cloth the way Grandma used to and then matured for 12 months, ready to be unwrapped on Christmas Day. RRP $13.99 from ALDI stores. Visit aldi.com.au

4. Citizen Watches
Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Citizen Watches Australia, this limited edition release from the L Collection showcases refined luxury, with the mother of pearl dial accentuating seven sparkling diamonds and subtle rose gold plating. RRP $1,100. Visit citizenwatches.com.au.

5. Ara shoes
Our 2015 Spring/Summer collections introduce new constructions and updated favourites, with attention to detail, metallic highlights and supple leather, all in a palette ranging from soft taupe to rich black.

6. Anchor
The new range of Anchor Cream has unique 1 and 2 cup-size bottles with measurement markers to ensure precise pouring. Visit www.anchordairy.com.au.

7. Beneful
Beneful Medleys are single serve pouches packed with tender meat, wholesome grains and vitamin-rich vegies, all in home-style gravy. Available in six delicious flavours for your best friend.

8. Ballantyne Butter
Australian-made and family-owned, Ballantyne has helped families make special occasions better since 1929. Make your Christmas brilliant with the Ballantyne premium dairy range.



9. Inside Out
Celebrate a life more magical with Disney Pixar's *Inside Out*. Available on Blu-ray and DVD.

10. Elevit
Elevit is a once daily multivitamin and mineral supplement specially formulated to provide essential nutrients to help support you and the healthy development of your baby. If you're thinking about trying to become pregnant, try Elevit. Always read the label. Use only as directed. CHC 70006-07/14.

11. Bioglan Superfoods
The ultimate in greens powders, Bioglan MultiGreens contains over 80 ingredients to improve your health and well-being. Simply mix 2 teaspoons into water for a powerful alkalizing, energising and antioxidant boost in just one glass.

12. Tired of being tired?
Iron is difficult for the body to absorb – that's where Floradix Herbal Iron Extract can be of assistance. Floradix contains a source of iron balanced with a range of B vitamins and vitamin C, as well as other nutrient-rich herbs. Taken twice daily. Always read the label and use only as directed. If symptoms persist, consult your healthcare professional CHC 43545-06/14.

13. Incredible India
If you're planning a trip to Incredible India for sightseeing, meeting family and friends, for short duration medical treatment or a business trip, now's the time to apply for an e-tourist visa. Go online to www.incredibleindia.org.

14. Myer
A collaboration between world-renowned, Australian-born designer Marc Newson and iconic brand Sunbeam, has created these kitchen showpieces. Orange range now available exclusively at Myer. Phone 1800 811 611 or visit myer.com.au.

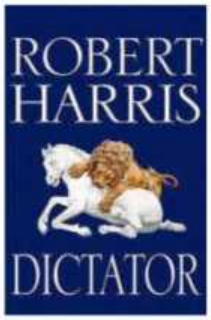
15. EasiYo
EasiYo Mini Yogurt Maker, available at Woolworths stores and online at ausnaturalcare.com.au. RRP $20.

16 Nespresso by KitchenAid®
The new Nespresso machine by KitchenAid® is sure to delight coffee aficionados and foodies alike. Featured in five rich colours, the latest machine offers another way to enjoy Nespresso Grands Crus coffees, just in time for Christmas! Available from all Nespresso Boutiques, www.nespresso.com.au and at selected retailers from October 1, 2015 for RRP $799.

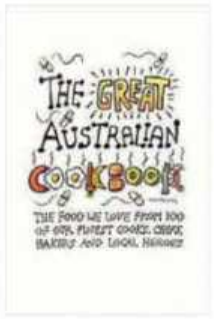


Leila McKinnon REVIEWS

LEILA MCKINNON IS THE HOST OF THE NINE NETWORK'S* INSIDE STORY *AND A REPORTER FOR NINE NEWS



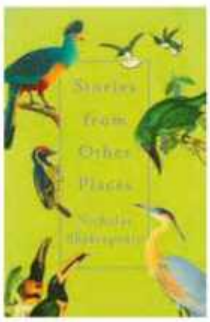
DICTATOR *BY ROBERT HARRIS, HUTCHINSON.*
Ancient Rome and all its violent political upheaval fairly zings off the page in this final book in Robert Harris' trilogy of the life of the orator and philosopher Cicero. The author of *Fatherland*, *Pompeii* and *An Officer And A Spy* is a master at bringing historical dramas to life. In *Dictator,* an ageing Cicero is juggling the conflicting demands of Julius Caesar, Pompey, Mark Anthony and Octavian, as the world's first republic descends into chaos. Buy this for history lovers.



THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN COOKBOOK, *THOM & CO.*
Maggie Beer's chocolate, quince and almond tart. Peter Gilmore's Korean chicken soup. Jill Dupleix's slashed roast leg of lamb. They're just three of the dozens of delectable but accessible recipes in this cookbook. Filled with artwork by Reg Mombassa and beautiful photos of the chefs, bakers and cooks and their families at home, this is a good-looking book for under the Christmas tree. Even better, Oz Harvest will receive some of the royalties.



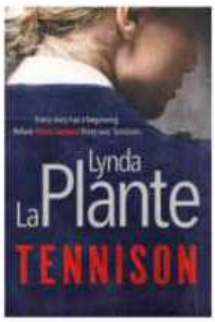
RECKONING *BY MAGDA SZUBANSKI, TEXT PUBLISHING.*
Magda's memoir is a moving exploration of her relationship with her Polish Resistance hero father. She begins, "If you had met my father you would never, not for an instant, have thought he was an assassin." As a child in Warsaw, Zbigniew Szubanski saw evil and betrayal. What he did about it and how it affected the rest of his life would by a kind of osmosis take root in Magda's head. *Reckoning* is a quest and, in a sad but satisfying way, Magda does find what she's seeking.



STORIES FROM OTHER PLACES *BY NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE, HARVILL SECKER.*
I would have bought this book just for the gorgeous chartreuse dust jacket adorned with colourful exotic birds. Yet the short stories between the covers are even more exquisite. Nicholas Shakespeare is a wonderful writer, never wasting a word, creating delicious characters and always leaving you pondering the depths of the passions and disappointments behind the tale. This is the perfect gift for a serious book lover – a book to treasure.



ARCHITECTS' HOUSES *BY STEPHEN CRAFTI, MURDOCH BOOKS.*
The photos of these incredible homes are mouthwateringly aspirational. Yet this is more than a coffee table book. The stories of these Australian houses and the families who live in them are diverse and intriguing. The home of architect Philip Goad is a favourite. The dark and decaying Art Deco house in Hawthorn was at risk of demolition when he snapped it up. He kept the restoration understated, preserving the worn patina, while adding a new wing and pavilion. A luscious gift for lovers of design.



TENNISON *BY LYNDA LA PLANTE, SIMON & SCHUSTER.*
If someone you know loved *Prime Suspect,* consider their Christmas gift done. Twenty-five years after creating no-nonsense Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison, Lynda La Plante has written the prequel. It's the story of 22-year-old Jane, just encountering the shocking sexism and dangers of life as a female police officer. La Plante is not the most elegant writer, but she's a cracking storyteller and Tennison rollicks along with verve and suspense.



SINATRA: THE CHAIRMAN *BY JAMES KAPLAN, LITTLE BROWN.*
The 883-page sequel to Kaplan's *Frank: The Making Of A Legend*, picks up in 1954 when "The Chairman" had made the greatest comeback in showbiz history at the Academy Awards ceremony. "His Oscar underlined the fact he was a fresh, viable recording artist with a new contract at Capitol Records." Written in five "acts", the last act, "The Late Show", movingly recounts his phone calls to former wife Ava Gardner after she suffered a stroke, her face twisted. Packed with punchy black and white news shots.



YOLO JULIET *BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND BRETT WRIGHT, RANDOM HOUSE.*
Juliet garners the hashtag YOLO (you only live once) and Shakespeare hurtles into the world of Generation Z with this hilarious version of *Romeo And Juliet* reimagined in text messages. Emojis heighten the action as the famous tragedy unfolds and the star-crossed lovers meet their fateful end. "OMG", texts Capulet when he hears of the double death his inter-family feud has caused. At least on Facebook Romeo and Juliet's relationship status flips to "for eternity".

REVIEWS BY JULIET RIEDEN AND KATIE EKBERG. THINKSTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES.



Hannah Richell REVIEWS

HANNAH RICHELL IS AN AUTHOR AND AUSTRALIAN BOOK INDUSTRY AWARD FINALIST



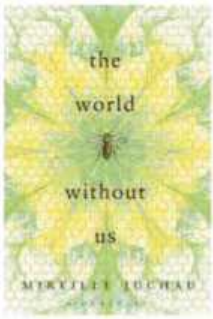
MORE LETTERS OF NOTE *BY SHAUN USHER, CANONGATE.*

Anyone with a love of words or an appreciation for the lost art of letter writing will relish this follow-up to the best-selling *Letters Of Note*. A true literary treasure trove, inside you will find exquisite love letters and poignant farewell notes. There are witty exchanges between celebrated comedians, words from renowned writers and musicians, as well as revealing missives documenting the horrors of war. Intimate and illuminating, this is an inspiring gift for the bibliophile in your life.



AFTER YOU *BY JOJO MOYES, PENGUIN.*

If you had your heart broken by Jojo Moyes' international best-seller *Me Before You*, you're certain to have her follow-up novel on your Christmas list. *After You* picks up eighteen months after Will Traynor's death, with Louisa Clark mired in grief and struggling to keep her promise to "live well". Moyes treads a careful line between honouring the previous love story, while propelling readers into unpredictable new territory as Louisa struggles to come to terms with her loss and find a new way to live. Buy it as a gift, or buy it for yourself – it's definitely one for summer.



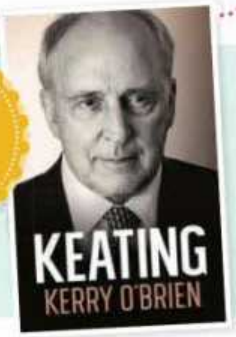
THE WORLD WITHOUT US *BY MIREILLE JUCHAU, BLOOMSBURY.*

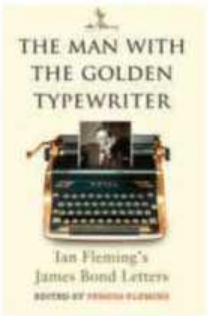
Australian writer Mireille Juchau weaves an irresistible, dream-like quality around her new novel. The Müller family live a secluded life on their farm in a remote, rainforest town. Affected by a significant loss, a deep sadness hangs over each of them. Evangeline is an absent mother, wandering all day with an empty pram, while Stefan, her husband, reaches most easily for the bottle. When an outsider, Jim, encounters Evangeline on the banks of a river, events are set in motion that will change them all.

KEATING *BY KERRY O'BRIEN, ALLEN & UNWIN.*

This doorstop of a book is probably as close to an autobiography of Paul Keating as we're likely to read. Multi-award winning TV journalist Kerry O'Brien interviewed the former Prime Minister for a four-part ABC series in 2013 and topped this up with a further 16 hours of conversation with Keating. O'Brien has known Keating for 40 years and more than any other political commentator has an acute sense of the ruthless, sometimes stubborn, intensely smart man. The book is presented as a series of conversations, which allows us to walk around Keating's head through his own words, but the former PM is also held to rigorous scrutiny.

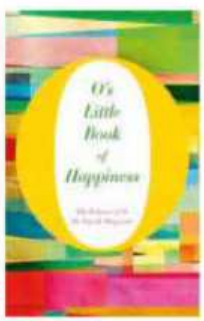
For avid politicos





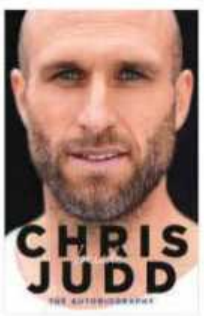
THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN TYPEWRITER: IAN FLEMING'S JAMES BOND LETTERS, *EDITED BY FERGUS FLEMING, BLOOMSBURY.*

He was a man of letters, corresponding with fans and critics, his publisher and famous writing friends – who included Raymond Chandler, Somerset Maugham and Nöel Coward – but it was to wife Ann that Ian Fleming tapped his first letter on the newly purchased gold-plated typewriter that was to launch his celebrated career. It was 1952 and heady on finishing his first novel, *Casino Royale*, he took a bet on its success and lavished himself with the gift. It was the sort of flashy entrance that his creation James Bond, agent 007, would have approved.



O'S LITTLE BOOK OF HAPPINESS, *PAN MACMILLAN.*

Scouring through 15 years of *O, The Oprah Magazine* archive, these 47 complementary essays from columnists and writers are woven into seven stalwart Oprah-style reading rooms. Author Patricia Volk's ode to "congealed anything" at the bottom of the pan in *Lumps Are Treasures* is a deliciously dirty little secret. Meatier subjects, such as a third of a life battling cancer, in *An Extraordinary Machine* by Lila Keary, rest much loved and dignified within the covers.



INSIDE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY *BY CHRIS JUDD, ALLEN & UNWIN.*

AFL star Chris Judd opens up about more than football in this very readable and candid memoir. Judd is one of our most talented players, winning the Brownlow Medal twice, and here he discusses issues surrounding the game's physicality, drug use and bad behaviour. He also talks intimately about falling in love with his wife, Perth model Rebecca Twigley, admitting that, at first, "I was fascinated by Bec's beauty, but did not have a huge regard for her intellect." Bec soon put him straight. A surprising read that proves there's more than meets the eye with Chris.

REVIEWS BY JULIET RIEDEN AND KATIE EKBERG. THINKSTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES.

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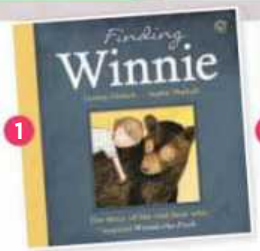
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HARLEQUIN



Children's books

From new editions of *Alice In Wonderland* to Aussie animal battler tales, **Katie Ekberg** gets lost in the magic of children's reading.



1



2



3



4



5



6

Twists on classic tales

1 **FINDING WINNIE** ***BY LINDSAY MATTICK, ILLUSTRATED BY SOPHIE BLACKALL, HACHETTE.*** Did you know there was a real-life Winnie? The baby bear cub was found and rescued in Canada in 1914 by veterinarian Harry Colebourn, who was on his way to tend to injured horses during World War I. Mattick is his great-grand-daughter, so the perfect storyteller of how Winnie went from the war fields to London Zoo, where she met a real-life boy, Christopher Robin.

2 **PETER PAN AND WENDY** ***BY J.M. BARRIE, ILLUSTRATED BY SHIRLEY HUGHES, HACHETTE.*** Coinciding with the release of the movie *Peter Pan*, starring Hugh Jackman as Blackbeard, this nostalgically two-colour illustrated paperback edition will seduce new and existing *Pan* fans alike. Hughes, 86, is the author of more than 50 books and the illustrator of over 200, including the contemporary best-selling *Alfie* series.

3 **THE NUTCRACKER** ***BY JANE RAY, HACHETTE.*** For one little girl, Christmas Eve will be unforgettable. When the clock strikes midnight, her new nutcracker dolls come to life ... It features Ray's distinctive peekaboo, through-the-window pictures.

4 **ALICE IN WONDERLAND** ***BY LEWIS CARROLL, ILLUSTRATED BY REBECCA DAUTREMER, HACHETTE.*** The dreamlike pre-Raphaelite illustrations bring an ethereal quality, which somehow suits and surely would have pleased Lewis Carroll, whose unabridged text floats alongside. Magical for both adults and children alike.

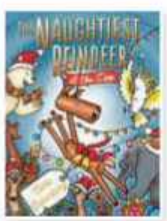
5 **ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND 150TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION** ***BY LEWIS CARROLL, ILLUSTRATED BY HELEN OXENBURY, WALKER BOOKS.*** A whole new generation will be enchanted by a free-style Alice – casually clad in shift dress, plimsolls and with flowing curly blond hair – in this contemporarily illustrated paperback version of Carroll's classic, first published in 1865.

6 **HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, ILLUSTRATED EDITION** ***BY JIM KAY, BLOOMSBURY.*** One of three Potter illustrators, this was the best commission Kay says he has ever received, citing designing the clothing, architecture and landscapes as visually exhilarating. (His take on Diagon Alley, home to the most famous wizarding establishments in the world, is bar none.)

The spirit of Christmas



REINDEER'S CHRISTMAS SURPRISE ***BY URSULA DUBOSARSKY AND SUE DEGENNARO, ALLEN & UNWIN.*** There's a message in every gift, which gentle, slender Reindeer delivers in a suitcase to his forest pals. Yet what can possibly cheer the lonesome deer himself, while his family is out delivering from Santa's sleigh in the sky?



THE NAUGHTIEST REINDEER AT THE ZOO ***BY NICKI GREENBERG, ALLEN & UNWIN.*** The naughtiest reindeer, Ruby, first kicked up her heels in 2013, when Santa disastrously replaced a poorly Rudolph as leader of the pack with the unpredictable party-animal – she widdled down a chimney. Since cooped up in a zoo (closed on Christmas Day) Ruby throws open the zookeepers' pantries for a raucous feast.



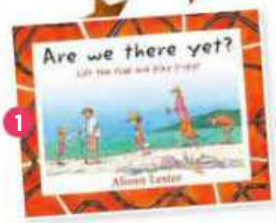
WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR? ***BY JANE GODWIN AND ANNA WALKER, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE.*** Surely the warmest writing and illustrating partnership, Jane Godwin and Anna Walker tug at the heartstrings in another passionately Australian-set story. Ruby's friends all write down their Christmas wishes – but there are some that are so hard to express.

PLUS ... A bedtime story

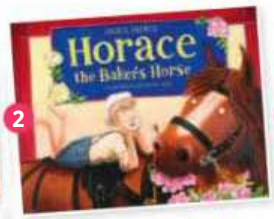


SHHH! I'M SLEEPING ***BY DOROTHÉE DE MONFRIED, GECKO PRESS.*** French illustrator Dorothée de Monfreid's animals never cease to appeal. This is a zoo of a sleepover, as eight mutts in two four-rung bunk beds cannot get to sleep. They turn the lights on and off, swap bunks, want water and want another story. "Are you asleep, Misha?" asks Nono. Not now, no.

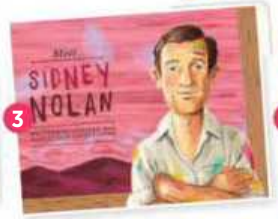
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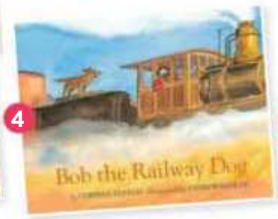
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All about Australia

1 ARE WE THERE YET? *BY ALISON LESTER, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE.* (Lift the flap and I-spy picture book.) A new adaptation of the driving-around-Australia in a caravan picture book, which hitched up hundreds of thousands of fans when published 10 years ago. Mum, dad, brothers and "me", Grace, invite you to chart their caravan journey (there's a map of Australia on the inside flap) as they spy "something beginning with C" in a river at Kakadu and play Monopoly when it rains at Cradle Mountain.

2 HORACE THE BAKER'S HORSE *BY JACKIE FRENCH, ILLUSTRATED BY PETER BRAY, NATIONAL MUSEUM AUSTRALIA.* A baker's horse delivering rounds on his own is a true tale, told to French by her grandmother; a family business floored by flu echoes of the 1919 epidemic. The country characters come alive to the touch in this delicious rhyming bake-off. Young Billy stands up to the plate to make the bread and valiant horse Horace trots off to deliver to the town, all off his own back.

3 MEET SIDNEY NOLAN *BY YVONNE MES, ILLUSTRATED BY SANDRA ETEROVIĆ, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE.* Nolan's police officer grandfather's tales of Ned Kelly (in this Penguin "Meet" series, which includes Nancy Bird Walton and Banjo Paterson) fuelled the schoolboy's fascination with the bushranger and his subsequent iconic paintings of Kelly in black helmet armour made from old ploughs. Eterović's illustrations are astonishing.

4 BOB THE RAILWAY DOG *BY CORINNE FENTON, ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREW McLEAN, WALKER BOOKS.* Fenton's previous books include *Queenie: One Elephant's Story* (she carried 500 zoo visitors a day until her death in 1945) and *The Dog On The Tuckerbox* (about early pioneers' dogs). This is the real-life tale of Bob, part of a cargo of homeless rabbit-hunting dogs railwayed up from Adelaide in 1884. Bob jumped into the brake van with guard Ferry, who adopted him, and became a legend in South Australia. His photo still sits at Adelaide Station.

5 RICH & RARE: A COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIAN STORIES, POETRY AND ARTWORK, *EDITED BY PAUL COLLINS, FORD STREET.* Shaun Tan (*Rules Of Summer*) is among the gifted contributors to this eclectic compendium in 13 categories, ranging from romance and historical to ghost and art. Tan's *The Greatest Cat That Ever Lived* is about the pet mourned by Eva and daughter Emerson when he does not wake up, cold, one morning. Yet why do the "missing cat posters" at the laundromat and supermarket bear photos that all resemble the late moggie Tugboat?

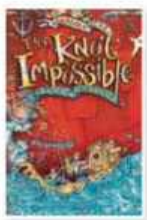
Great full-length reads



THE SHEPHERD'S CROWN *BY TERRY PRATCHETT, PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE.* The late Terry Pratchett dedicated his final and 41st Discworld novel, in a touching twist, to character Granny Weatherwax, whose burial in a forest is at the start of *The Shepherd's Crown*. As a witch, she predicts her own death, something Pratchett's fans were ill prepared for when faced with his loss earlier this year. Character Tiffany Aching is promoted to chief witch in this novel, while Pratchett's crown shall never be replaced. "For Esmerelda Weatherwax – mind how you go," nods Pratchett on the dedication leaf.



THE DOLDRUMS *BY NICHOLAS GANNON, HARPER COLLINS.* The exquisite debut novel from New York author and artist Nicholas Gannon evokes the extraordinarily intimate, delicately hewn worlds of the likes of Hugo Cabret and Lemony Snicket. Frustrated Archer lives in a museum-like home on 375 Willow Street – one of the divine sepia and sea green-splashed illustrations in the book. One day, he collides, literally, with Oliver, who has a penchant for running with his eyes shut. Another extraordinary child, former ballerina Adelaide, awaits in the wings, too. She has a wooden leg since a lamppost crushed her, itself toppled by a careening van. Archer's adventure begins. Movie now, please.



THE KNOT IMPOSSIBLE *BY BARBARA ELSE, GECKO.* Telling his actor family to "Go break a leg", Rufkin is dispatched to the city and a life working at a salvage yard with Mister Skully and Mistress Wanda Mucclack, who shall be his guardians. "If cockles and carrots are not your favourite supper, merely murmur your dislike," says his landlady, dishing up the slop to the polite boy. Yet Rufkin, who suffers from stage-fright and has been banned from the family tour, is about to speak up, save the day and get the applause he deserves. The final in the Tales of Fontania series.





Activity books

HEY JACK! BUILD A ROBOT COSTUME! *BY SALLY RIPPIN, HARDIE GRANT EGMONT.* Packaged in a gift box of four *Hey Jack!* paperbacks, this cute-as-pie robot costume is designed to fit all. It is strung together (string not provided) using the pre-cut strong cardboard costume pieces. There are shiny robot decorations and even pipe-cleaner antennae.

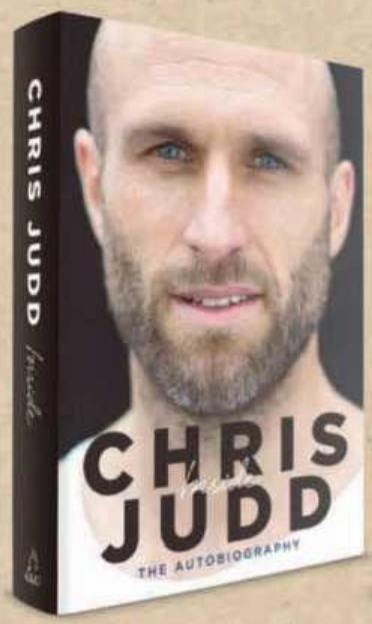
STAR WARS: WHERE'S THE WOOKIEE? A SEARCH AND FIND ACTIVITY BOOK, *HARDIE GRANT EGMONT.* We're used to *Where's Wally?* but he's been elbowed this Christmas by a certain furry criminal called Chewbacca, wanted for crimes against the Empire. From scavenging Jawa Market to the enormous space station, he is virtually impossible to spot in these double-page illustrations.

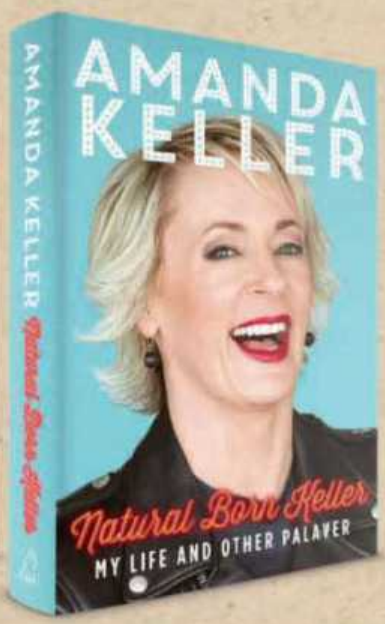
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Cruising Bordeaux's WINE VILLAGES

A cruise around the Dordogne, Garonne and Gironde rivers is a wonderful introduction to the Bordeaux area, discovers **Sally Macmillan**.



Top: A vineyard in the Médoc region of Bordeaux. Above: The Scenic Diamond ship.

COASTING ALONG Bordeaux's graceful boulevards and weaving around its narrow cobbled streets on a bike was the perfect way to get rid of jet-lag cobwebs. Bright September sunshine danced off majestic 18th- and 19th-century riverfront buildings and highlighted medieval nooks and crannies in the older quarters – were we really in Australia only a day before?

Paolo, our energetic bike tour guide from Bordeaux à Vélo, delivered potted histories of the key sites – just enough information to digest and to reinforce the impression that the so-called Port of the Moon is one of France's most beautiful cities. My cruise companion and I enjoyed the tour (especially riding the electrically assisted e-bikes) so much, we immediately signed up for two more in the coming days. Meanwhile, we took off on our own and rode a circuit between the 19th-century stone bridge, Pont de Pierre, and the elegantly futuristic Pont Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Europe's tallest lift bridge which allows larger ships to sail upriver from the Atlantic to dock at Bordeaux's central quays.

Bordeaux and the surrounding vineyards and villages of Aquitaine are relatively new destinations for river cruise companies. The Garonne and Dordogne rivers meet at Bordeaux to form the Gironde estuary, and the waterways are subject to big tides that influence cruise itineraries. Low water levels at the historic port of Cadillac meant we couldn't dock there as planned and our itinerary was rescheduled to run in reverse.

We didn't miss any of the stops on the itinerary and docked several times in Bourg, which wasn't in the brochure, but has its own charms. Cruising in this region is more about criss-crossing coffee-coloured waterways and bussing to various destinations rather than sailing seamlessly from port to port or country to country, as on most other European river cruises. Think of the ship as your all-inclusive floating hotel from where you set off to explore the many spectacular attractions of the region – world-famous wines and châteaux, ancient citadels and food, glorious food. ➤

GETTY IMAGES.







Sights to behold: (from left) the spectacular Châteaux de Roquetaillade; cycling on the banks of the Garonne is a great way to experience Bordeaux; night dining at the Grand Hôtel de Bordeaux.

Cadillac, a short bus ride from Bordeaux, is a *bastide* or fortified town, one of about 400 still standing from the Middle Ages. Over the years, its 16th-century castle has been a decadent royal residence, a women's prison and a girls' reformatory. Today, it's an historic monument adorned with opulent tapestries and antique furniture that allows visitors an insight into a fascinating if sometimes grim past.

More living history lessons were on the menu at the incredibly picturesque village of Saint-Émilion, the bustling riverside town of Libourne and a bike tour through the renowned Médoc wine-growing region.

A group of about 15 of us got on our trusty steeds at the pretty port of Pauillac for a misty morning ride through the vineyards. Along the way, we learned that the Médoc is home to some of France's most important wine villages (Saint-Julien, Margaux, and Saint-Estèphe), whose châteaux – such as Mouton, Lafite and Latour – produce some of the world's most sought after wines.

The grapes, which include cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc, were about three weeks from being harvested. After sampling some fruit from the vines, we were invited to taste wines from previous vintages on a tour of Château Lagrange, whose illustrious history dates back to pre-Roman times.

Scenic's Bordeaux cruises offer several opportunities for wine-tasting, but the Bordeaux region is also famous for its brandy, foie gras and seafood. One of the best-known names in brandy is Rémy Martin and a day trip to the fortified town of Cognac includes an excellent tour of the enormous estate.

I admit I passed on a morning tour to the La Ferme de Biorne duck farm in rural Bergerac, where foie gras is produced from duck and goose livers. I've never liked the taste and although it's considered a delicacy, the idea of gavage or force-feeding doesn't appeal. Yet on a day trip to Arcachon, a lovely seaside town on the Atlantic coast, we attended a tasting session of another regional specialty – seafood and oysters – at a local producer's restaurant-cum-sales outlet. It was a fascinating educational experience and the oyster lovers among us testified that the generous platters of molluscs, washed down with a very palatable Bordeaux rosé, were divine.

"The city's 'golden triangle' district is home to stylish boutiques."

Our third and final bike tour was from Bourg to Blaye, a 30-km round trip. The countryside is sublime – old stone houses, 12th-century churches and magnificent châteaux appear at every turn as you cycle through rolling hectares of vineyards. Blaye's imposing citadel is one of three fortifications built in the 17th century on the Gironde river to protect Bordeaux from invaders. We cycled through the well-preserved gateway to the main square and discovered a maze of laneways, where there were some very tempting art and fashion boutiques, and panoramic views of the river from the top.

The ship returned to Bordeaux for two days at the end of the cruise. An hour's bus ride took us to the spectacular Château de Roquetaillade, which has starred in several French films and has been inhabited by the same family for more than 700 years.

There was plenty of time for shopping for souvenirs and presents in the city's "golden triangle" district, which is home to stylish boutiques, well-known department stores and high-end designer shops. My favourite was Le Comptoir de Mathilde, which stocks an amazing array of mustards, spices and chocolate. We finished off our shopping spree with glasses of champagne at the Grand Hôtel de Bordeaux – c'est la vie, indeed. ■

BOOKINGS

Scenic's 10-night Breathtaking Bordeaux river cruise starts in Bordeaux and calls at Cadillac, Libourne, Blaye and Pauillac. It runs from April to October 2016. Fares start from $7295. Book by January 31, 2016, to receive Scenic Savings, including flights to Europe for $995 per person. Phone 138 128, or visit scenic.com.au.

SHIP FACTS

Scenic Diamond was launched in 2008 and carries a maximum of 169 passengers in 85 staterooms and suites; those on the top two decks have balconies and the lower-deck staterooms have windows. Facilities include a large lounge, the main Crystal Dining Room restaurant, River Café, outdoor dining area, sun deck with shaded sun-loungers, massage room and elevator.

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EXCLUSIVE – Enjoy a glass of champagne as you take in the sunrise at the iconic temple of Angkor Wat

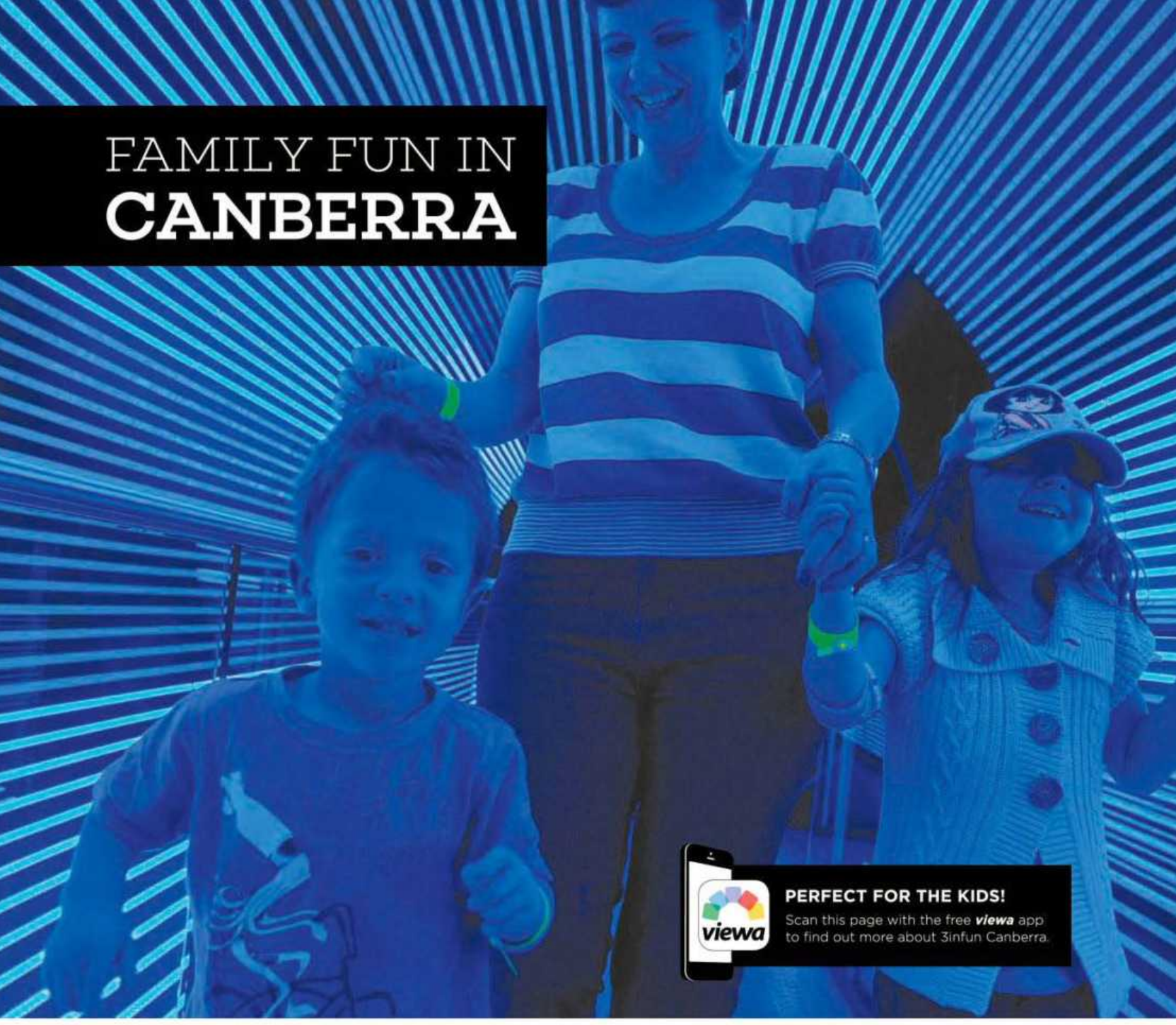
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VISIT CANBERRA

Great *escapes*

Sue Wallace tries glamping on a Sydney island, finds a hotel that takes pooches, a biker tour of India, some Antarctic thrills and more.



EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Perfect for a Christmas wish list – Lord Howe Island's Capella Lodge *Women's Weekly* Exclusive: stay seven, pay six nights, including bonus room upgrade from the Capella Suite to Lagoon Loft, and premium picnic pack. Valid for stays from April 1 to May 30, 2016, for bookings made by January 31, 2016. Call (02) 9918 4355 and quote Capella Lodge *Women's Weekly* Exclusive. Visit capellalodge.com.au.



Go glamping

Fancy million-dollar views on a backpacker's budget? Head to Sydney's Cockatoo Island, fall asleep under the stars at the water's edge and awake to an amazing sunrise. Go camping from $45 a night, glamping or rent a heritage house or apartment on the UNESCO World Heritage-listed site. There are self-guided walks, a marine centre, tennis courts, a cafe and bar. Visit cockatooisland.gov.au.

APP OF THE MONTH

Periscope *See what people are doing the world over with live streaming. Visit periscope.tv.*

INDIA BY ENFIELD ▶▶▶

Get set for the ride of your life on the women-only motor bike tour of spicy Southern India. Female pillion passengers can also join the 12-day ride on classic Royal Enfield Desert Storm motorbikes. The 1400km adventure leaves from Goa on January 24, 2016. Priced from $6038 for riders and $5121 for pillion passengers. Visit extremebiketours.com.





DOGS ALLOWED

Heading to Canberra and can't bear to leave your pooch at home? Relax because the new 86-room Abode Narrabundah Hotel also welcomes canine guests. Opening special studio rooms are $110 per night with free WiFi and a daily $10 Abode Pantry voucher. Dogs are $60 extra and get their own treats. Abode Hotels now has four properties in Canberra. The special ends on December 31, 2015, with travel until January 31, 2016. Visit abodehotels.com.au.



Antarctic chill thrills ▶

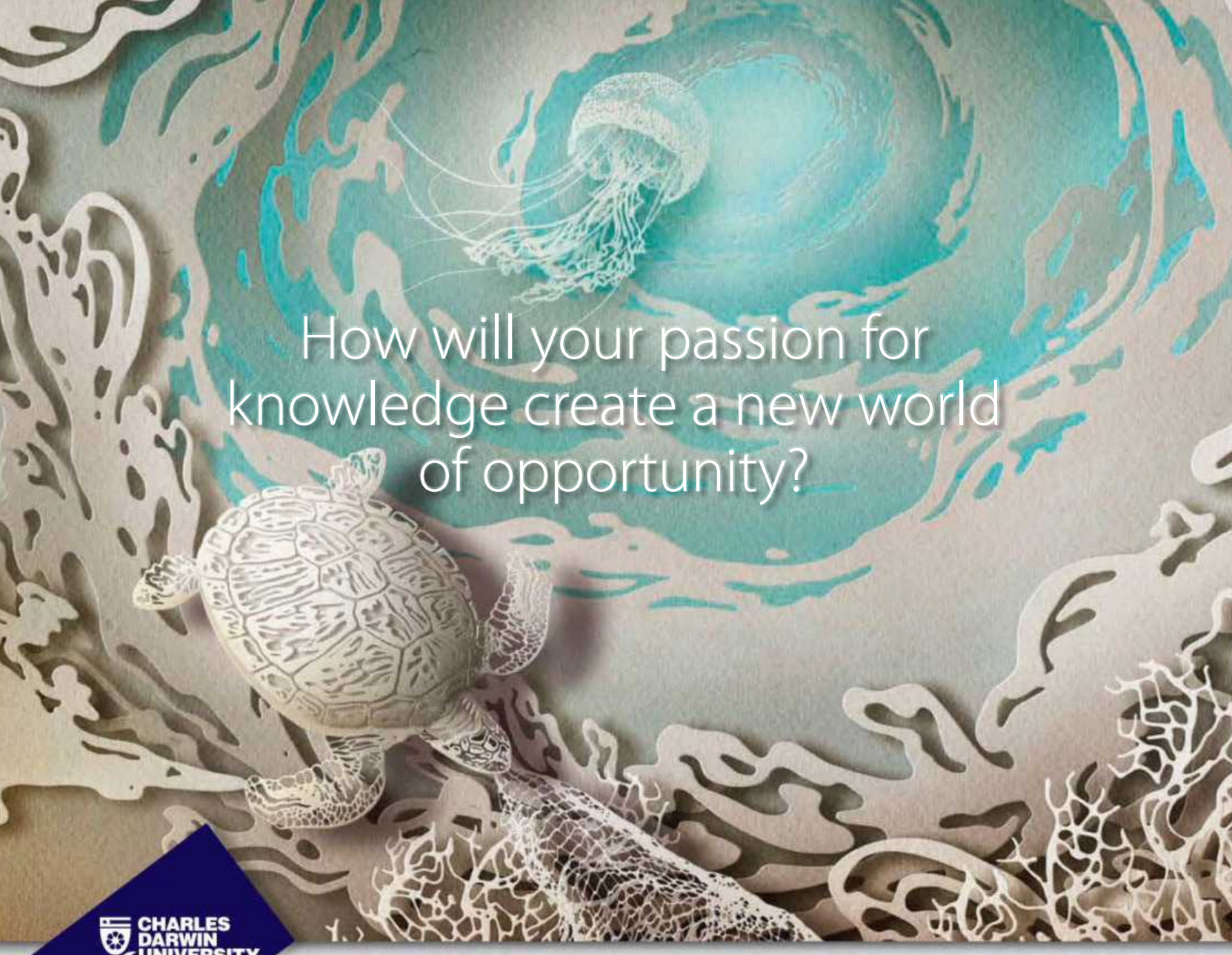
Feel the freeze in the chill zone at Victoria's new Antarctic Journey attraction at Nobbies Centre, Phillip Island. This is the world's first interactive Antarctic experience in collaboration with Phillip Island Nature Parks and WWF Australia (World Wide Fund for Nature). Augmented reality technology gives visitors a chance to stand on an ice floe and pat a penguin, stroke a seal or marvel at a whale within arm's reach. Visit penguins.org.au.



CULINARY CRUISE

In October 2016, you can meet and chat to the stars of *The Weekly*'s Test Kitchen, Fran Abdallaoui (left) and Michele Cranston, who will be giving special cooking demonstrations on board Scenic Tours' Jewels of Europe Culinary River Cruise. Over 15 days, you will sail from Budapest to Amsterdam, enjoying all the regional delicacies en route, savouring the food and drink that each country is known for as you make your way along the Danube, Main and Rhine rivers. Priced from $8195 per person, twin share. To book, visit scenic.com.au/aww.

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THE AUSTRALIAN Women's Weekly

Puzzles

December 2015

Compiled by **Elizabeth Kelly**

Find A Word

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C	E	S	S	S	V	M	A	H	D	E	Z	A	L	G
M	A	Y	O	N	N	A	I	S	E	H	C	A	E	P

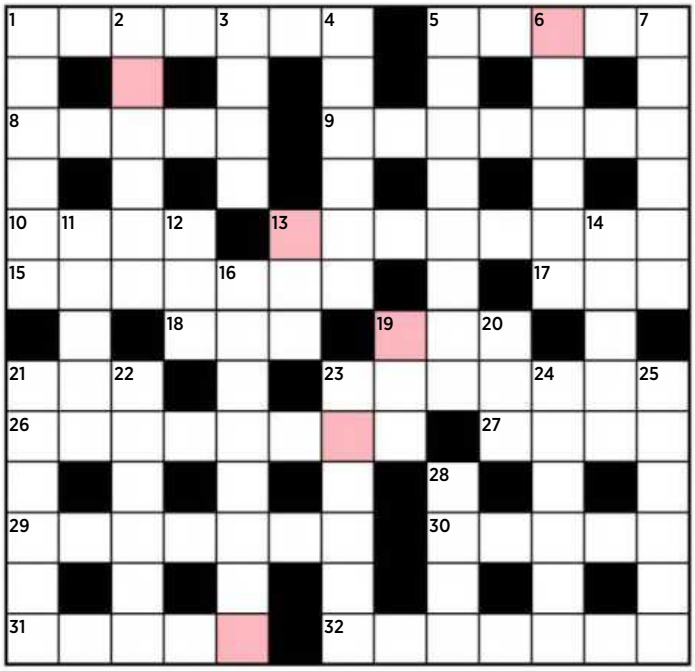
We've hidden a smorgasbord of festive food and drink terms in the grid above. They can be spelt across, down, diagonally, backwards or forwards, but are always in a straight line. When you have found all the words listed below, you should have 13 letters left over and these spell the two-word winning answer. When you have the winning answer, see the instructions at the bottom of the page for your chance to win $100.

BEER
BRANDY BUTTER
CHEESECAKE
CRANBERRY SAUCE
CUSTARD
FRUIT PUNCH
GINGERBREAD
GLAZED HAM
GRAVY
GREEN SALAD
ICE-CREAM
LOBSTER
MAYONNAISE
NUTS
PANETTONE
PAVLOVA
PEACHES
PLUM PUDDING
SANGRIA
SHERRY TRIFLE
SHORTBREAD
SMOKED SALMON
STRAWBERRIES
TURKEY
WINE

Solution in next month's issue.

WIN 5X$100 When you have the winning answer, **SMS** this answer, name and address to **199 55 399**. SMS cost 0.55c (incl GST). Or **PHONE** and leave your answer, name, address and daytime phone number by calling **1902 555 399**. Call cost 0.55c incl. GST. Calls from mobiles cost extra. Salmat Digital Pty Ltd. Helpline: 1300 131 276. Under 18s must seek bill payer's permission. First five correct entries drawn will each win $100 cash. Entries close 23:59 AEST on December 20, 2015. Draw date and time: 12:00pm AEST on December 21, 2015. See last puzzles page for details of Conditions of Entry.

Easy Crossword



ACROSS

1. Bullfighter
5. Swift, speedy
8. Madrid is there
9. Well-liked
10. Ornamental fabric
13. Helped
15. Highest mountain
17. Biblical pair, Adam and –
18. Swiss peak
19. Wiggle, – tail
21. Drink slowly
23. Quiet, total –
26. Frightening
27. Coasters, beer –
29. Seaman
30. Tenth part
31. Musical sounds
32. Propriety of behaviour

DOWN

1. Brawn
2. Hypnotised, in a –
3. Low sand hill
4. Meal
5. Retaliatory act
6. Well-mannered
7. Mock
11. Futile, of no –
12. Period of time
13. Serpent
14. Expel by legal process
16. Components
19. Toupee, hairpiece
20. Precious stone
21. Pink fish
22. Rosella, eg
23. Trapped
24. Talk much about little
25. High regard
28. Of the ear

Solution in next month's issue.

WIN 5X$100 When you complete the crossword, the letters on the shaded squares, reading left to right, top to bottom, will spell the winning word. When you have it, **SMS** your answer, name and address to **199 55 601**. SMS cost 0.55c (incl GST). Or **PHONE** and leave your answer, name, address and daytime phone number by calling **1902 555 601**. Call cost 0.55c incl. GST. Calls from mobiles cost extra. Salmat Digital Pty Ltd. Helpline: 1300 131 276. Under 18s must seek bill payer's permission. First five correct entries drawn will each win $100 cash. Entries close 23:59 AEST on December 20, 2015. Draw date and time: 12:00pm AEST on December 21, 2015. See last puzzles page for details of Conditions of Entry.

The Colossus

COMPILED BY **CHRISTINE LOVATT**

ACROSS

1. Scruffiness
6. Part of pelvis
10. Not excessively
16. Chart
17. CD brand (1,1,1)
19. Casual shoes
20. Trim photograph, eg
21. Fills with reverence
22. Indianapolis state
23. Stood opposite
26. Trap
28. Unchanging, – job
30. Grain storage towers
31. Disfigure
33. Overwhelm
35. Contactable (2,4)
37. UK award (1,1,1)
38. Act as a lure
39. Festivals
41. Fermented apple juice
43. Expression of rebuke
44. Baghdad is there
45. Fracas
46. Mid-point
48. Kathmandu's country
50. Curb, – in
51. Coils
52. Final
53. 40 winks
55. Cut into cubes
57. Venetian craft
60. Renounce
62. Gymnastics floor pad
64. Reduces in worth
67. Carry out, – orders
68. Bow-legged
69. Scram!
71. Utters
72. Sketch comedy shows
74. Gloomy
75. Apprehensive
77. Mend, his bones will –
79. Release from cage (3,3)
82. Donkey
83. Dinner bells
85. Singer, – King Cole
87. Virus or bacterium
89. Representative (abbrev)
90. Red, white or sparkling
91. Train engine sounds
92. Non-exploding shell
94. Social bigot
96. Aerial defence force (1,1,1,1)
98. 500 sheets of paper
99. Spherical map
100. Exhibitionist
102. Slaughter
104. Cosmonaut, – Gagarin
106. Most corroded
107. Loathsome
109. Dog leash
111. Necklace picture cases
112. Cricket equipment
113. Supersonic aircraft
114. Pine or palm
116. Ills
118. Gauge, gas –, eg
119. Regulations
121. Helper
123. Kangaroo pouches
125. Romantic outing
127. Unopened bloom
128. Consumers
130. Lounge about
132. Greenwich Mean Time (1,1,1)
134. Be without
136. Everything, – of it
137. Slender sword
139. Young female
140. Throb with pain
141. Laymen
143. Happen
145. Prude
147. Flower, sweet –
148. Ashen
149. Brick-baking furnace
150. Scraped, – out a living
152. Nun's costume
154. Winter flakes
156. Bullets (abbrev)
158. 007, James –
159. Has, possesses
161. US, Uncle –
163. Pleased
165. Keenly excited
167. Song, *Auld – Syne*
169. Calls, – meeting
171. Italian car firm
173. Liquefying
175. Rescue a boat, eg
177. Use wheeled boots
179. Bart Simpson's sister
181. Concede
182. Circuits
183. Volcanic flow
185. Smart
187. Condiment, rock –
189. Cove, inlet
190. Repressed, – up
191. Control knob
192. Aussie Rules (1,1,1)
194. Hanker, crave
196. Repetitive strain injury (1,1,1)
197. TV and radio host, Jules –
198. Ancient warrior, Attila the –
199. Inclined
202. Ice-cream server
204. Storybook monster
205. Research rooms (abbrev)
206. Strong desire
208. Hearing organs
210. Brass musical instruments
212. Waves, – tail
213. Crippled
214. Unfailing
216. College
217. Special luxuries
219. Freeloader
221. Approaches
223. Shakespeare's King –
225. Type of whiskey
226. Rouse from sleep
227. Honey liquor
230. Serious play
232. Razors
235. Light-bending glass
236. Overlook
238. Gee whiz!
240. Fierce felines
242. Fawns' fathers
243. Sports ground
244. US actor, – Hanks
245. Putrid, rotten
246. Prominent
247. Australian Taxation Office (1,1,1)
248. Testy, annoyed
249. Latex
251. Twice five
253. Bake meat in oven
255. Lit, kindled
256. Petroleum producers' cartel (1,1,1,1)
258. Paint roughly
259. Nuclear pact (4,3)
260. River, – Grande
261. Sat-nav system (1,1,1)
262. Warships
263. Makes certain
264. Monarch's daughters

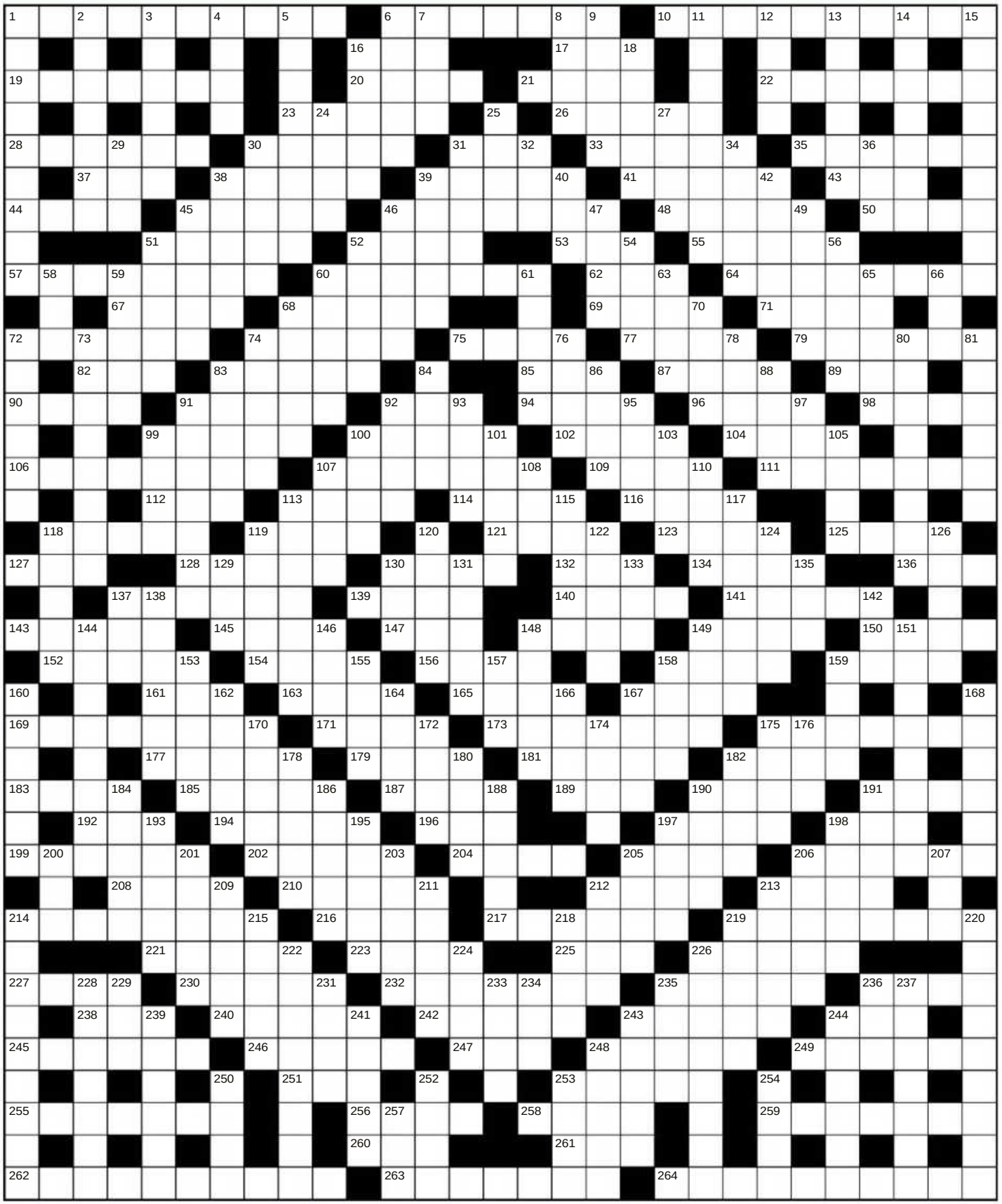
DOWN

1. Splattering
2. Tennessee's neighbour
3. Bug, insect
4. Schnozzle
5. Is enough
6. Rabbit relatives
7. Portable music device
8. Information updates
9. Alter text
11. Insulted
12. Great Lake
13. Fervent
14. Come forth
15. 12-month foals
16. Genuine article, the real –
18. Scientist, Sir – Newton
24. Emollient, – vera
25. Baby cow
27. Wreck
29. Backyard grill
30. Trades for cash
31. Valetta is there
32. Uncooked
34. Lukewarm
36. Aggressive dog
38. Unscheduled stoppage
39. Fizzy
40. City, – Francisco
42. Sprint contests
45. Skin blemishes
46. Robust
47. Tropical root vegies
49. Licit
51. Vestments
52. Lusts, – for
54. Group of hounds
56. Hair-styling appliance
58. Lyrical poem
59. Drench
60. Long sharp teeth
61. Deserves
63. Sharp taste
65. Michaelmas daisy
66. Scent, – de cologne
68. Overindulge
70. Level, layer
72. Rephrase
73. Evaporated
74. Mistrust
76. Pull sharply
78. Serving platter
80. Light opera
81. Mildest
83. Spirit, spectre
84. Blend
86. Slave away
88. Attack savagely
91. Solve mystery (5,2)
92. Morse sounds
93. Dexterous
95. Puffed
97. Sway, go to and –
99. Taunt
100. Dabs
101. Rustic
103. Vientiane is there
105. Decorated, – the cake
107. Chops
108. Frangipani garland
110. Distribute cards
113. Clashing
115. FBI founder, J. – Hoover
117. Cleaning fish, eg
118. Chew
119. Lascivious smirks
120. Country, South –
122. Function host
124. Steam burn
126. Sprites
129. Drink delicately
130. Edge
131. Peruvian beast
133. Old form of "your"
135. Family
137. Apply friction to
138. Eventuates
142. Longbow timber
144. Mardi Gras
146. Putting pastime
148. Sticky
149. City, Hong –
151. Working, – dough
153. Armoured vehicles
155. Plaintive howl
157. Movie company (1,1,1)
158. Stripe of colour
159. Lubricants
160. Carve a statue
162. Substantial
164. Low platform
166. Fluent and insincere
167. Flower, arum –
168. Basement
170. Pigs' pens
172. Russian emperor
174. Baby bottle end
175. Beach surface
176. Suitable
178. Pass, – legislation
180. As well
182. Camera component
184. Later
186. Tiler's paste
188. Taut
190. Alehouses
191. Desert hills
193. Become aware
195. Swedish peace prize benefactor
197. Dawdles, – behind
198. Person, – being
200. Tavern
201. Towelled, – oneself
203. Steps
205. Overdue
206. Sultan's wives' quarters
207. Graze, consume
209. Menacing growl
211. Persian rulers
212. Paths
213. Malaysian noodle soup
214. Unwed
215. Particle
218. Miscalculates
219. Hurts
220. Sanctifies
222. Flatter
224. Proportional, pro –
226. Sumo fighter
228. Window shelters
229. Surgeon, eg (abbrev)
231. Poker stake
233. Distillery tubs
234. Self-regard
235. Experts
236. Angry crowd
237. Consumes alcohol
239. Ski season
241. Mexican mister
243. Fine-breed horses
244. Struggle
248. Clever strokes
250. Jittery
252. Fluorescent, – colours
253. Seethe
254. Knock out
257. Pastry dish, meat –

Solution in next month's issue.



Make it a *magical Christmas.*



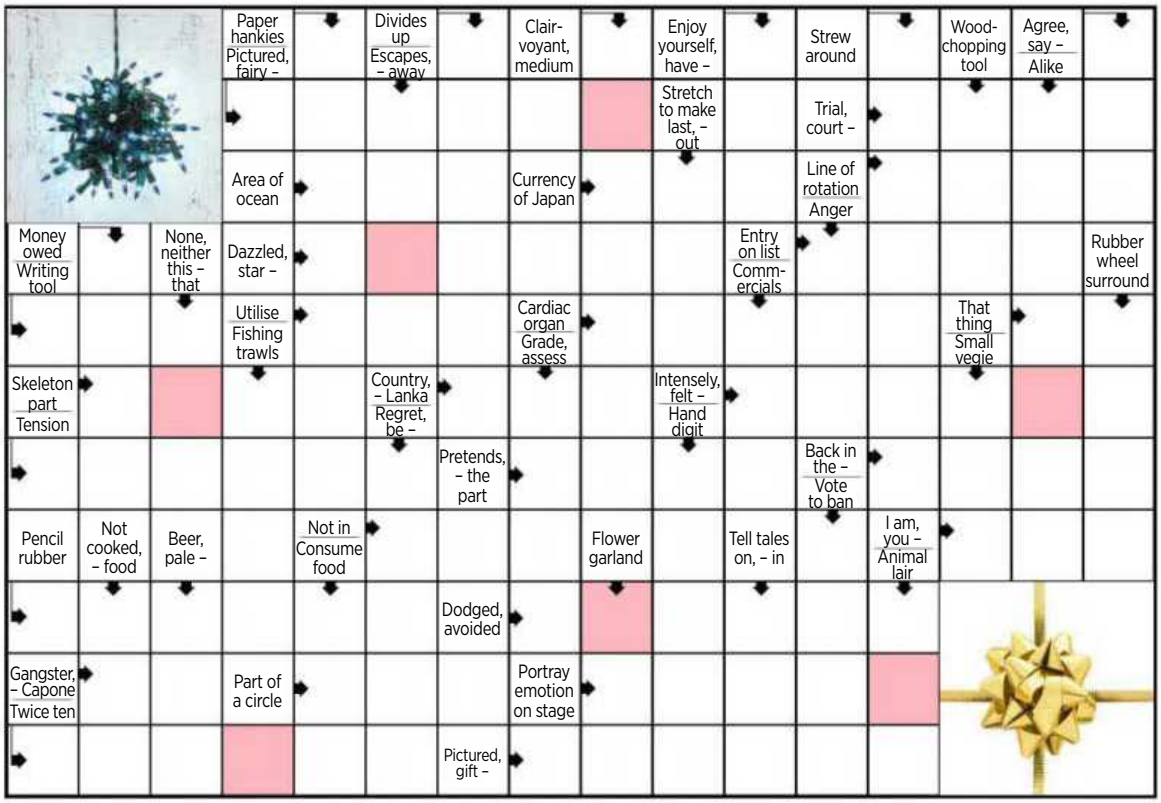
Adopt a Cabbage Patch Kid.

WIN 5X$100

Insider

The clues for this puzzle are all within the grid itself. Write your answers in the direction shown by each arrow. All answers run left to right or top to bottom. When you have finished, the letters on the shaded squares will spell the winning word. When you have this, **SMS** your answer, name and address to **199 55 804**. SMS cost 0.55c (incl GST). Or **PHONE** and leave your answer, name, address and daytime phone number by calling **1902 555 804**. Call cost 0.55c incl. GST. Calls from mobiles cost extra. Salmat Digital Pty Ltd. Helpline: 1300 131 276. Under 18s must seek bill payer's permission. First five correct entries drawn will each win $100 cash. Entries close 23:59 AEST on December 20, 2015. Draw date and time: 12:00 AEST on December 21, 2015. See last puzzles page for details of Conditions of Entry.

Solution in next month's issue.



Clueless

20	13	19	21	3	26	6	26	24	■	15	4	13	6	16
26	■	6	■	26	■	26	■	3	■	6	■	16	■	3
6	15	26	3	12	6	20	■	17	21	26	25	2	5	20
10	■	1	■	25	■	14	■	26	■	26	■	25	■	13
13	23	25	14	20	14	■	6	14	14	25	2	16	13	8
4	■	16	■	14	■	6	■	13	■	6	■	13	■	■
4	13	2	14	■	6	21	3	4	3	2	25	14	13	8
13	■	■	■	6	■	21	■	10	■	13	■	■	■	13
26	13	19	13	19	12	13	26	13	8	■	9	25	21	14
■	■	25	■	12	■	6	■	14	■	11	■	15	■	20
14	3	4	8	25	13	26	14	■	18	17	16	25	3	26
20	■	4	■	20	■	6	■	7	■	20	■	15	■	3
3	21	25	16	25	3	16	■	13	22	17	6	4	4	24
3	■	3	■	3	■	15	■	13	■	26	■	13	■	13
4	25	16	13	16	■	13	23	21	26	13	14	14	13	8

1	2	3	4 L	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14	15 C	16 N	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		

Write the relevant letters into the boxes to find the winning answer.

3	24	14	20	13	26	14

Solution in next month's issue.

WIN 5X$100

In this puzzle, each letter of the alphabet is represented by a number from one to 26. We've put in three numbers and their corresponding letters in the top panel. Fill this in as you go, then use your letters to fill in the squares below the panel to get your winning word. When you have this, **SMS** your answer, name and address to **199 66 444**. SMS cost 0.55c (incl GST). Or **PHONE** and leave your answer, name, address and daytime phone number by calling **1902 552 401**. Call cost 0.55c incl. GST. Calls from mobiles cost extra. Salmat Digital Pty Ltd. Helpline: 1300 131 276. Under 18s must seek bill payer's permission. First five correct entries drawn will each win $100 cash. Entries close 23:59 AEST on December 20, 2015. Draw date and time: 12:00pm AEST on December 21, 2015. See last puzzles page for details of Conditions of Entry.



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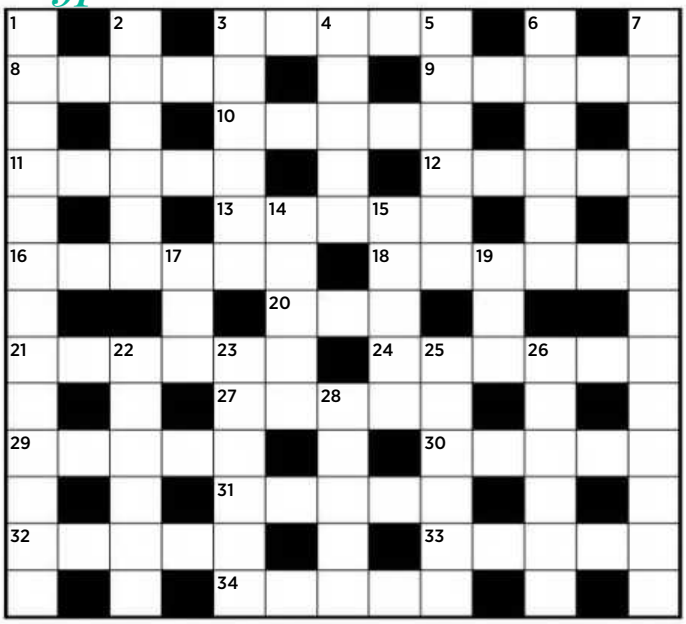
THINKSTOCK BY GETTY IMAGES. ALAMY.



MISS AUSTRALIA'S SMILE - POWERED BY WHITE GLO

MISS UNIVERSE AUSTRALIA 2015 MONIKA RADULOVIC

Cryptic Crossword



ACROSS

3. How to rob a man of steel (5)
8. A rope is used in this stage production (5)
9. It's a profit once more (5)
10. Get that sailor to return to the fortune-teller (5)
11. Young Oliver and his wild dancing (5)
12. Some extra dealers needed to buy and sell (5)
13. Love having an ally who is so faithful (5)
16. There's something fishy about such a hobbyist (6)
18. Breaks those plates which are blooming pretty (6)
20. Take the plunge with a little diplomacy (3)
21. To drink, I'm needing a little protection at this point (6)
24. You get into the cracked canal at this gap (6)
27. As a sign, I will arise somehow (5)
29. Him singing? A perfect score or it's the end (5)
30. Such a lad's to be given only cold food (5)
31. The clan both Bert and I belong to (5)
32. So to a bee it appears to be overweight (5)
33. Pined for the rackety siren? (5)
34. That's right! Send it out – send money (5)

DOWN

1. I'd used the contraction to assert the opposite (13)
2. How we sing if needling (6)
3. This baby's toy may disconcert you (6)
4. Sounds as if you inter that small and juicy thing (5)
5. A new start for 3. Down and you tell about it (6)
6. Wear it and you may get water on the brain (6)
7. Comprehending that one is too sedentary (13)
14. Or about to go red on giving a command (5)
15. Is some chap pleased to give it to the teacher? (5)
17. Lie about some Islander putting it on (3)
19. Let's face it, it's just a twitch (3)
22. How Ben uses art with his repartee (6)
23. Trade with a little change from 22. Down (6)
25. Declare that all rest as required (6)
26. Except on condition that the United Nations has less joining it (6)
28. Distinct style of an idiot coming to a bad end (5)

Solution in next month's issue.

Spot The Difference

Test your powers of observation. The two pictures below may look the same, but we've made five changes to the one on the right. Can you spot them? *Solution overleaf.*





Bogglewords

Can you work out the words or phrases depicted here? *Solution overleaf.*

1. NE SIGN
2. EDEST
3. HEAD
4. ELCYC

Letter Chase

Hidden in the square is the name of a festive item. Starting at the shaded square, move from letter to letter in any direction to find what it is. Remember you can only use each letter once. *Solution overleaf.*

R	E	I	S
K	R	H	T
C	C	S	M
A	R	C	A

Sudoku

Each number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine rows, nine columns and 3 x 3 blocks. Tip: No number can occur more than once in any row, column or 3 x 3 block. *Solution overleaf.*

Lovatts Super Sudoku *magazine is available at your newsagent now.*

8								4
2		4		3	8			
				5	4	8	3	7
	2				7	6		1
	1		8		6		5	
3		9	4				7	
6	3	1	5	7				
			1	8		3		5
9								2

Work Out

Use the letters from the words given below to fill the squares in the grid to create six five-letter words. We've put in three letters to get you started. *Solution overleaf.*

			E	
	■		■	
	R			
	■		■	
				D

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PROVE
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Word Maker

How many words of four letters or more can you make using the letters given here? Each one must include the central letter and you should have at least one nine-letter word in your total. Avoid plurals, proper nouns, hyphenated words, those with apostrophes and verb forms ending with "s", eg, "bakes". *Solution below.*

26 SMART 29 TERRIFIC 32+ BRILLIANT!

O	D	C
E	R	A
D	T	E

ANSWERS

December

SUDOKU

8	7	3	9	6	1	5	2	4
2	5	4	7	3	8	1	9	6
1	9	6	2	5	4	8	3	7
5	2	8	3	9	7	6	4	1
4	1	7	8	2	6	9	5	3
3	6	9	4	1	5	2	7	8
6	3	1	5	7	2	4	8	9
7	4	2	1	8	9	3	6	5
9	8	5	6	4	3	7	1	2

BOGGLEWORDS

1. Neon sign. **2.** Destiny. **3.** Headlong. **4.** Reverse cycle.

LETTER CHASE

Christmas cracker.

WORK OUT

L	O	V	E	D
A		O		R
W	R	I	T	E
N		C		A
S	P	E	E	D

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

1. Wrap on gift at bottom left changes colour.
2. Gold bauble added to the tree.
3. Pompoms on stocking changes colour.
4. Ribbon on tree is longer.
5. Bow removed from big gift at bottom right.

WORD MAKER

Acre, Actor, Adder, Adore, Adored, Arced, Cadre, Card, Carded, Care, Cared, Cart, Carted, Cater, Catered, Cedar, Cord, Corded, Core, Cored, Crate, Crated, Create, Created, Credo, Creed, Dare, Dared, Dart, Darted, Dear, Decoder, Decor, Decorate, **Decorated**, Deer, Deter, Doer, Drat, Eater, Erode, Eroded, Odder, Race, Raced, Rate, Rated, React, Reacted, Read, Rectо, Redo, Reed, Road, Rode, Rota, Rote, Taro, Tear, Tore, Trace, Traced, Trade, Traded, Tread, Tree, Trod.

November

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

S		C	O	N	T	R	A	C	T	S		C
T	O	R		O		A		A		E	G	O
O		E	N	V	I	S	A	G	E	D		M
I		A		E		C		E		G		E
C	A	M	E	L		A		S	P	E	L	T
	S		G		E	L	M		R		A	
S	P	I	R	A	L		A	L	I	E	N	S
	E		E		K	I	D		D		C	
G	N	A	T	S		N		R	E	F	E	R
A		P		P		S		A		U		O
U		P	E	R	S	U	A	D	E	D		U
N	I	L		E		L		I		G	A	G
T		E	L	E	C	T	R	O	D	E		E

EASY CROSSWORD

WINNING WORD: Rosette.

D	E	C	A	N	T			A	C	O	R	N
	R		L		A	G	A	P	E		A	
B	A	S	S		L		P	E	N	C	I	L
	S	H	O	V	E	L	S		S		D	
L	E	A			N		E	X	U	D	E	D
U		T	R	U	T	H			R	A	R	E
T	O	T	E		S	A	P		E	S	S	E
E	V	E	N			Y	E	A	S	T		D
S	E	R	E	N	E		R			A	S	S
	R		W		R	E	S	T	O	R	E	
A	S	S	I	G	N		I		A	D	D	S
	E		N	E	E	D	S		S		G	
M	E	R	G	E			T	I	T	T	E	R

INSIDER

WINNING WORD: Canter.

			R		I		E		C		B		P
		N	E	W	M	A	N		U		E	L	S	E
			P	E	A		S	H	E		S	E	C	T
	E			E	N	G	I	N	E		S	I	T	E	
A	C	T		A	T	E		A	W	O	K	E		P	I
	H	E	A	T		S	I	R		L	I	G	H	T	S
C	O	A	R	S	E		R	E	A	D		E	A	R	L
			C		L	E	I		D		S		T	E	E
W	A	S	H	E	D		S	E	L	E	C	T			
	G	O		Y	E	S		D	I	V	A	N			
T	E	N	D	E	R		R	O	B	E	R	T			

FIND A WORD

WINNING WORD: Steeplechasing.

CLUELESS

1=S, **2**=X, **3**=P, **4**=T, **5**=Z, **6**=L, **7**=M, **8**=K, **9**=C, **10**=O, **11**=H, **12**=U, **13**=B, **14**=Q,**15**=G, **16**=A, **17**=I, **18**=W, **19**=N, **20**=Y, **21**=E, **22**=F, **23**=D, **24**=J, **25**=R, **26**=V.

WINNING WORD: Bridle.

COLOSSUS

| | | | | | | | | | | | |

Test your wit! Make up a funny caption for this picture of Cate Blanchett (below) for your chance to win $50. Send this coupon to December Laugh Lines, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, PO Box 414, Eastern Suburbs MC, NSW 2004. Entries are due in by December 20, 2014. See below for the Conditions of Entry and Bauer Media Limited's Privacy Notice.



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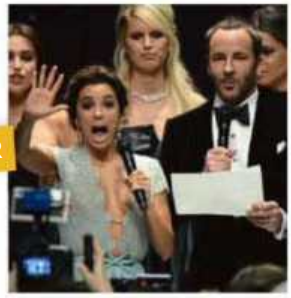
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OCTOBER WINNER

Our photograph of Eva Longoria inspired this winning caption: **"Bingo!"**

$50 prize to A. Bartos, Ferny Hills, Qld.

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CATE BLANCHETT AND EVA LONGORIA: GETTY IMAGES.



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1.

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2. Peter Alexander

Give the gift of sweet dreams this Christmas with Peter Alexander's sleepwear, featuring playful prints in luxurious fabrics with lace and satin trims. There is no better place to find an indulgent gift for them (or yourself).

3. Dettol

For effective cleaning and 10 x better protection from germs*, try Dettol's new Healthy Clean products. *Dettol Healthy Clean products provides 10 x better protection from germs (S.aureus) vs the leading non-antibacterial surface spray trigger cleaner (MAT 16/12/2014) based on microbiology testing. Always read the label. Use only as directed.

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14.

8. Tassal

New Tassal Salmon Rashers are produced with Tasmanian-grown Atlantic salmon and all-natural ingredients. Perfect for pan-frying, they can be simply enjoyed with some eggs for a healthy breakfast that's ready in minutes. Visit tassal.com.au.

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12. Café Royal

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13. Tim Tam

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14. Veet

Veet Spawax is your new professional quality wax warming kit that melts the wax and maintains it at the ideal temperature. For salon-perfect smoothness at home, try it now!

Sagittarius
Nov 23-Dec 21

The New Moon in Sagittarius reminds you that everything about your exterior, from your name to your image, is now ripe for a strategy. You definitely need a game plan, as people are now judging you by your Christmas wrapping and will continue to do so until 2017. Have your calculator ready for an important new arrangement with those who also have a stake in your finances, home or business. This is not about power, it is about practicalities, but you will need to sidestep questions about control.



Jane Fonda
Sagittarius December 21, 1937

Capricorn
Dec 22-Jan 20

You may have given up on one important group involvement, but it will be back in your life by January and you will love the resurrected friendships. The Full Moon is a big, glowing reminder of the closure you need with a former partner, or the importance of a new chapter with your soulmate or a potential lover. When two worlds collide at any point in your life, there is always work to be done later and your horoscope says that Christmas to New Year is the time.

Aquarius
Jan 21-Feb 19

There is not much you can do to change what is unavoidable and inevitable about your friendship and the group which surrounds it. What you can do, however, is come up with a different way of managing the situation at the New Moon. An important part of your CV that you had assumed could be written off will return, as the person, project or organisation will be back for Christmas.

Pisces
Feb 20-Mar 20

You really took a long and winding road with your website, book, course, travel or foreign connections in 2014 and 2015. A person or place on the journey you had assumed was gone forever will turn up again and, this time, it will not stretch your patience. What happened with your group projects and your friendships in November now needs a long and leisurely backward glance. Time for a talk, perhaps.

Aries
Mar 21-Apr 21

Once you pass final judgement about your partnership this Christmas, you can look forward to a completely different future. No time or energy has been wasted, as you will see in the second half of 2016. You do need to stare down the realities of travelling, the web, studying, publishing, teaching or foreign people at the New Moon and make a practical choice. If this dovetails with your job, wider reshuffles are part of the story.

Taurus
Apr 22-May 21

The New Moon tells you to accept what you cannot change about your business, money, house, possessions or apartment and consider parting with what or who isn't working. This is particularly important if it involves publishing, the web, travel or education, as the Full Moon falls in this zone of your horoscope. You will be amazed at a minor miracle involving your former, current or potential lover. The ghost of Christmas past is back.

Gemini
May 22-Jun 22

You cannot wave a magic wand where your former, current or potential partner is concerned. However, you can wish for a sensible strategy and the New Moon is the ideal time. The facts and figures will be lined up in front of you now, ready for more meetings or signatures in January. You obviously have quite a lot of control and power. Others also have a strong stake in the outcome, though, so this is a time for negotiation and compromise. ➤

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Cancer

Jun 23-Jul 23

Mercury, the planet of communication and information, tells you to pursue the facts (and nothing but the facts) with your partner. This makes the Full Moon a great deal easier for you, emotionally. If your former or potential partner is the issue, try a Christmas card with a real message to open the doors. This time of year is about children, godchildren, nieces, nephews and young people's charities. You will be stunned at how a situation or person whom you had set to one side makes a comeback.

Leo

Jul 24-Aug 23

Your ruler, the Sun, changes signs just before Christmas, enabling you to look at the realities of your workload, your diary and your reward for putting other people first. New Year's resolutions about your body will last well beyond January if you use the incredible information that turns up this month. Children, godchildren, young relatives or serious relationships suggest a new beginning. Take your time, as the impact will last for months – perhaps even two more years. Ask the voice of experience.

Virgo

Aug 24-Sep 23

The conversation that you need to have about (or with) the children, godchildren or young relatives will unfold this month and change everything. Set aside questions about who and what is in control, and aim for a new set-up for 2016. This also applies to serious relationships, which could make you an aunt or parent one day. An important part of the internet, education, publishing, languages or media that you had given up on will return now. It's a Christmas miracle and you will definitely enjoy it.

Libra

Sep 24-Oct 23

It's that time of year when your credit card, holiday expenses or business and property plans for 2016 are on your mind. The other person involved will make you feel as if you are both Lennon and McCartney playing *We Can Work It Out* and it certainly will. Most of all, you need to think about the new possibilities with your family, house, flatmates, summer accommodation or apartment. Make time and space for a very special discussion and prepare for a remarkably different 12 months ahead.

Scorpio

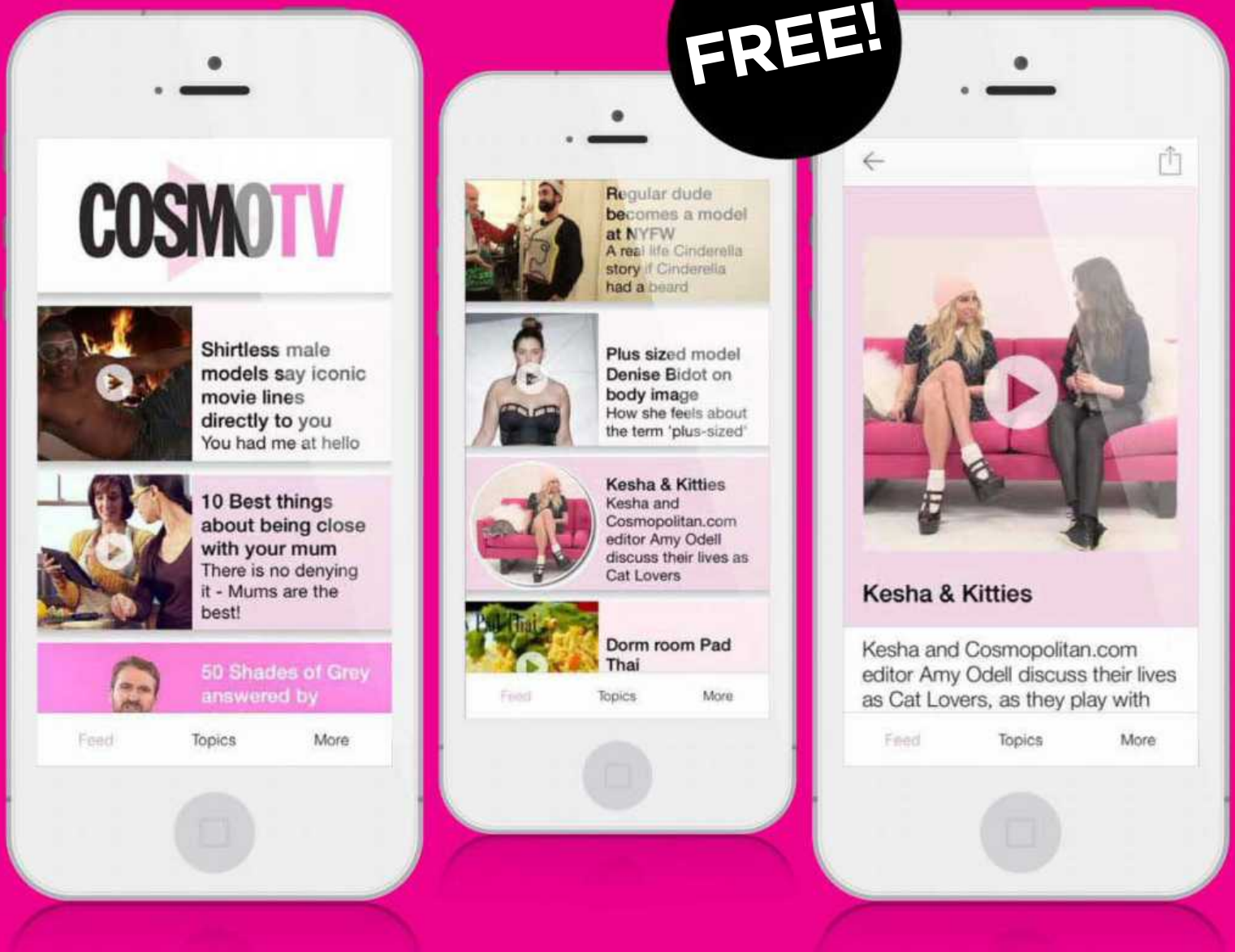
Oct 24-Nov 22

Your ruler, Pluto, joins Mercury, the planet of discussion and paperwork, as the year draws to a close. You have a crucial meeting, speech, publication, letter or announcement ahead and if you understand the medium as well as you know your message, you will change everything. Expect an amount of focus on your name or image now. Those around you are altering their view of you after a very demanding two years and you can enjoy the difference. It's time for a mini relaunch, Scorpio. ■

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The yuletide gravy boat

Massive white linen tablecloth, tick. Ridiculously fancy silver cutlery, tick. Unnecessary ham stand, tick. **Pat McDermott** gets ready for Christmas Day.

> It's going to be a squeeze. Once again, the salads must sit on the piano.

"WHERE ARE YOU?" called one of the kids from behind a tower of presents she was carrying in the door. It's still weeks before Christmas, but she's "wrapped and ready".

"I'm down here," I called out. I was on my hands and knees with my head in the cupboard under the bookshelves in the living room. This is where the "good" china lurks. The fragile, old-fashioned, historic bits and pieces I dig out for special occasions.

"Are you sure you want to get all that stuff out this year?" she said. "Why don't you use the kitchen dishes? Let's do 'simple' – it'd be so much easier."

She is seriously right. It would be easier, but would it be Christmas? Christmas, to be done properly, has its rules. There must be a heavy white linen tablecloth, as big as a bed sheet and dauntingly difficult to wash and iron. I finally packed mine away last week from Christmas 2014. Turn around and it's time to spread it out again, a blank canvas on Christmas morning, but by midnight, it will look like a painting by Jackson Pollock done in gravy and red wine. Ahhh, yes.

I tottered into the dining room with my daughter behind me. She pointed out the fruitlessness of going to all this trouble. I was carrying dinner plates and a gravy boat. I only see the gravy boat once a year. "Hello, old friend, nice to know you're still with us."

Now for the dessert plates, side plates and a platoon of wine glasses. It's going to be a squeeze. Once again, the salads must sit on the piano. Where is the ham stand?

"You don't need a ham stand. Just whack it on a platter!"

"There will be no 'ham-whacking' in this house," I mutter, grimly.

"Do you want red or white wine on the table?" I asked the Man of the House (MOTH). "There isn't room for both."

"That's like asking which of the kids I love most!" he grumbled.

"You're going to regret this at 9 o'clock Christmas night," my daughter said, carrying a huge vase under one arm and candlesticks under the other. "You *know* you will." Almost certainly, I thought, but it's too late to turn back now. I ran through my checklist.

1 Is the Christmas tree leaning at a nice angle, weighed down by baubles, beads and a tsunami of tinsel?

2 Are 11 Christmas stockings hanging from the mantelpiece, each embroidered with the owner's name, so Santa, who at midnight is enjoying another glass of red wine, doesn't get confused?

3 Did I buy Christmas crackers? Nothing says Christmas like paper hats, bad jokes and small plastic choking hazards.

When I grew up in Canada, every Christmas was white. Christmas morning, we'd tramp single file to the middle of the front lawn, turn around and fall backwards into frosty softness. We'd swish our arms and legs to make snow angels, then lie still, listening to the deep silence and blinking into the falling snow, sticking our tongues out to catch the flakes. In winter, fresh fruit was flown from California or far-off, mysterious Australia. As a special treat, I'd find a juicy mandarin in the toe of my Christmas stocking. It tasted amazing for being rare.

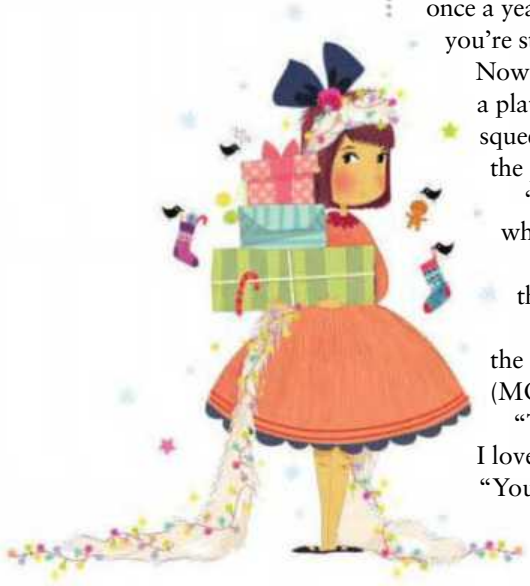
I put a mandarin in the toe of each of my Aussie kids' Christmas stockings one year. It caused a small riot. "Is this little lunch?" asked Ruff Red. I broke out the Rocky Road by way of an apology from Santa.

This Christmas, as always, I'll use the silver knives, forks and spoons I inherited from my mother. She began collecting when a family friend took her to an exclusive silversmith and suggested she choose a pattern. "I was only six years old, so I picked the fanciest one," she said, explaining the ornate handles and curlicues. She received a piece of silver on birthdays and at Christmas. When she started to work, she bought her own. They were only brought out on special occasions. Christmas was one of them.

When the cutlery arrived in Australia, there was a note. "*Dear Patty, life is too short not to use the good silver. Mum.*"

So I do.

From all of us to all of you, Merry Christmas. ■



To connect with Pat on Facebook, visit www.facebook.com/PatMcDermottau.

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